



AltaLink Management Ltd.

Vauxhall Solar Farm Connection

October 12, 2023

Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 28440-D01-2023

AltaLink Management Ltd.

Vauxhall Solar Farm Connection

Proceeding 28440

Applications 28440-A001 to 28440-A003

October 12, 2023

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The Commission may, no later than 60 days from the date of this decision and without notice, correct typographical, spelling and calculation errors and other similar types of errors and post the corrected decision on its website.

1 Decision summary

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission approves applications from AltaLink Management Ltd. for a new transmission line to connect Solar Krafte Utilities Inc.'s Vauxhall Solar Farm to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System. For the reasons outlined in this decision, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development is in the public interest, having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

2 Introduction

2. Solar Krafte Utilities Inc. has approval from the Commission to construct and operate a 60-megawatt (MW) solar power plant, designated as the Vauxhall Solar Farm, in the Vauxhall area.¹ It also has approval to construct and operate the solar project substation, designated as Solstice 549S Substation.²

3. To connect the solar power plant to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System (AIES), Solar Krafte requested system access from the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO). The AESO approved the need to connect the power plant to the AIES through the abbreviated needs approval process.

4. To meet the need identified by the AESO, AltaLink filed an application with the AUC for approval to construct and operate a 100-metre-long, 138-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, designated as Transmission Line 763BL, from the approved Solstice 549S Substation to the existing Transmission Line 763L via a T-tap connection. The proposed Transmission Line 763BL would be located on private land. AltaLink stated that it anticipates requiring one or two tangent structures for the proposed 763BL transmission line between the Solstice 549S Substation and the tap point.

5. AltaLink also filed applications for approval to connect the transmission line to Solar Krafte's Solstice 549S Substation and to alter the Transmission Line 763L to accommodate the connection. The alteration consists of adding one new T-tap structure to the existing Transmission Line 763L and modifying or replacing two existing structures if necessary. The connection point with existing Transmission Line 763L is one metre inside the eastern road allowance boundary along Range Road 163.

¹ Power Plant Approval 27077-D02-2023, Proceeding 27077, Application 27077-A001, December 16, 2022.

² Substation Permit and Licence 27077-D03-2022, Proceeding 27077, Application 27077-A002, December 16, 2022.

6. In addition, AltaLink applied for approval to install approximately three kilometres long, underground fibre optic cable in the road allowance on the east side of Range Road 163 and the north side of Township Road 134. The proposed fibre optic cable would be located primarily within a road allowance, with the remaining portions located within the proposed right-of-way for Transmission Line 763BL and on AltaLink-owned lands at the existing Vauxhall 158S Substation.

3 Findings

7. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that approval of the applications is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

8. The Commission has reviewed the applications and has determined that the information requirements specified in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* have been met. Also, the proposed development is consistent with the requirements of the AESO's functional specification.

9. AltaLink confirmed that it consulted with all stakeholders directly adjacent to the proposed right-of-way of Transmission Line 763BL and with all the landowners on whose land the fibre optic work is proposed. It also confirmed that it notified all stakeholders within 800 metres of Transmission Line 763BL and directly adjacent to the proposed fibre optic cable. AltaLink stated that there are no outstanding concerns with the connection project. The Commission is satisfied that AltaLink's participant involvement program meets the requirements of Rule 007.

10. The project area is on previously disturbed agricultural land and follows existing disturbance along an active range road and township road. The Commission also notes that the proposed transmission line is only 100 metres long, the proposed underground fibre optic cable is routed primarily within existing road allowance, and the alterations to existing Transmission Line 763L would be within the existing right-of-way. To mitigate the project's impact on wetlands and wildlife, AltaLink stated that it will schedule work outside of the great horned owl nesting season and conduct wildlife sweeps and behaviour monitoring if any work is required within the period. The Commission accepts that the environmental effects of the proposed project can be minimized and that there will be no significant adverse environmental effects from the project.

11. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers the project to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

4 Decision

12. Pursuant to sections 14, 15, 18 and 19 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves the applications and grants AltaLink Management Ltd. the following approvals:

- Appendix 1 – Transmission Line Permit and Licence 28440-D02-2023, to alter and operate Transmission Line 763L.

- Appendix 2 – Transmission Line Permit and Licence 28440-D03-2023, to construct and operate Transmission Line 763BL.
- Appendix 3 – Connection Order 28440-D04-2023, to connect Transmission Line 763BL to Solar Krafte Utilities Inc.’s Solstice 549S Substation.
- Appendix 4 – Telecommunications Facilities Permit and Licence 28440-D05-2023, to construct and operate a fibre optic cable between Solstice 549S Substation and Vauxhall 158S Substation.

13. The appendixes will be distributed separately.

Dated on October 12, 2023.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by

Douglas A. Larder, KC
Vice-Chair