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ALBERTA UTILITIES COMMISSION

Kinbrook Solar, GP Inc. and Solar Krafte Utilities Inc. Rainier Solar Farm, AUC Decision 28439-D01-2024

Rates - Electricity

Application

Kinbrook Solar, GP Inc. and Solar Krafte Utilities Inc. (the “Applicants”) applied to construct and operate a 450-megawatts (“MW”) solar power plant designated as Rainier Solar Farm, and the Rainier 1050S Substation (the “Project”), located six kilometers southwest of the City of Brooks.

Decision

The AUC found that approval of the Project would not be in the public interest given its unmitigable negative effects on the environment and wildlife, and denied the applications.

Pertinent Issues

The AUC determined that, in accordance with the *Alberta Wildlife Directive for Alberta Solar Energy Projects* (“*Directive*”), appropriate site selection at the landscape level is the first and most critical factor in preventing significant negative effects on wildlife. The AUC found that most of the Project was sited on native grassland, which was evaluated by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (“AEPA”) to be a high risk to native and critical habitats. The AUC held that diverse wildlife, including multiple species of management concern, use the native and critical habitats on which the Project was situated.

In the AUC’s view, the Applicants failed to demonstrate that the amount of pre-existing human-made disturbance in the Project area reduced the value of native and critical habitats or that this disturbance justified a departure from the *Directive’s* avoidance standard. The AUC concluded that, given the importance of site selection for avoiding impacts to native and critical habitats, the Applicants’ proposed mitigations were not adequate to reduce the environmental impacts on wildlife and the availability of native and critical habitats to an acceptable level.

The AUC concluded that the approval of the applications was not in the public interest and denied the applications in accordance with ss 11, 14, 15 and 19 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* (“*HEEA*”).