ENERGY REGULATORY REPORT

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ALBERTA UTILITIES COMMISSION

***Dolcy Solar + Energy Storage Project*, Decision 28723-D01-2024**
Solar - Facilities

Application

Dolcy Solar Inc. ("Dolcy") applied to construct and operate the Dolcy Solar + Energy Storage Project ("Project"), which consisted of a 300-megawatt ("MW") solar power plant, the Dolcy 1148S Substation, and a 100-MW, 200-megawatt-hour ("MWh") energy storage facility ("ESF").

Decision

The Alberta Utilities Commission ("AUC") approved the application, subject to conditions.

Pertinent Issues

Background

The Project will be located on approximately 404 hectares (998 acres) of agricultural land in the Municipal District ("MD") of Wainwright, Alberta, approximately 20 kilometres ("km") north of Metiskow and 20 km southwest of Edgerton.

The power plant will consist of approximately 625,000 Longhi 600-watt bifacial solar panels/modules on a fixed-tilt racking system and 76 SMA SC4000 inverter/transformer units. The substation will be enclosed by a chain-link fence and will include two 240/34.5-kilovolt (kV), 167-megavolt ampere (MVA) transformers, one 240/34.5-kV, 111-MVA transformer, and a control building. The ESF will consist of 62 Tesla Megapack 2XL battery modules and integrated inverters, and 16 associated transformer stations. In addition, the Project will include access roads, fences, temporary workspaces and a 34.5-kV underground collection system to connect the power plant to the substation and ESF.

AUC Decision

AUC Findings

The AUC determines whether a proposed project is in the public interest, having regard to its social, economic, environmental and other effects. The applicant bears the onus of demonstrating that approval of its project is in the public interest.

The AUC made the following findings in relation to the Project:

- The agricultural impacts were adequately mitigated;
- The environmental impacts of the Project were reasonable;
- Dolcy's approach to reclamation was reasonable;

- Fire risks associated with the Project were limited and would be mitigated to an acceptable level by Dolcy's monitoring systems and emergency response plan ("ERP");

- Dolcy's participant involvement program ("PIP") with stakeholders generally achieved the objectives of consultation and notification set out in Rule 007: Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines ("Rule 007");

- The Project was expected to have minimal visual impacts and was not likely to create hazardous glare conditions for drivers and unacceptable glare effect on residents;

- The Project was predicted to comply with the permissible sound levels as defined in Rule 012: Noise Control ("Rule 012"); and

- The Project would generate emissions-free electricity and create municipal tax revenue and job opportunities.

Conditions of Approval

The AUC imposed the following conditions of approval:

- Dolcy must file with the AUC a final project update, at least 90 days prior to the start of construction, to confirm that the Project remained within the final project update allowances for solar power plants and energy storage facilities specified under Rule 007;

- In the final project update, Dolcy must file an updated agrivoltaics plan that reflects the final project layout, and incorporates the best available knowledge and best practices for initiating the agrivoltaics program;

- Dolcy must file an annual agricultural report that documents the production realized from the agrivoltaics program no later than January 31 for the first three years of the agrivoltaics program;

- Dolcy must submit an annual post-construction monitoring survey report ("Report") to Alberta Environment and Protected Areas ("AEPA") no later than January 31 of the year following the mortality monitoring period, and submit to the AUC the Report and the AEPA's response letter within one month of the AEPA's letter issuance to Dolcy;

- Dolcy must install bird strike diverters on the Project fencing, including any additional mitigation measures recommended by AEPA, to prevent collision of birds with the fencing;

- Dolcy must install a remote monitoring and detection system that is programmable to automatically notify emergency response providers, including the local fire station, immediately upon activation;

- Dolcy must install a thermal imaging camera at the ESF site for continuous monitoring, and integrate the camera into its system alarms, shutdowns, and emergency response planning, where appropriate;

- Dolcy must continually, during construction and operation, and at a minimum annually, review and update the site-specific ERP, and incorporate any reasonable changes necessary to address any concerns received, including providing the plan to the municipal district and the local fire departments;

- Dolcy must develop and implement a reliable communication plan based on input from local residents and landowners that adequately accounts for any limitations or deficiencies of the local telecommunications network;

- Dolcy must provide on-site training to the local first responders following the commissioning of the Project and the completion of the ERP;

- Dolcy and any subsequent operator must maintain sufficient insurance coverage for the ESF against any reasonably foreseeable liabilities;

- Dolcy and any subsequent operator must implement ongoing upgrades to improve the safety of the ESF, including implementing firmware and software enhancements, monitoring capability enhancement, process changes and safety standards;

- Dolcy must notify impacted stakeholders about the AUC approval, permit and licence, including the construction completion date specified in the AUC decisions, and the most up-to-date construction schedule for the Project;

- Dolcy must file with the AUC a visual screening plan that details the discussion with impacted stakeholders, including the final details of the visual impact mitigation, at least 90 days prior to the start of construction. Dolcy must pay for the purchase and installation of any vegetation required by the visual screening plan;

- Dolcy must submit to the AUC an updated solar glare assessment as part of the final project update;

- Dolcy must promptly address any complaints or concerns regarding solar glare from the Project and file with the AUC an annual report detailing any complaints or concerns received regarding solar glare during the first three years of operation, with the first report due no later than 13 months after the Project becomes operational;

- Dolcy must use solar panels with anti-reflective coating for the Project;

- Dolcy must conduct a post-construction comprehensive sound level ("CSL") survey and report the results of the CSL survey to the AUC within one year after the Project commences operation;

- Dolcy must describe the pile foundation used in the final project update, including the reasons for selecting screw piles or driven piles; and

- If the pile design is altered after the final project update, Dolcy must provide to the AUC, no later than the start of construction, a summary of, and the reasons for, those changes.