

In response to the recent Government of Alberta temporary pause on AUC approval of all new power plant applications for renewable energy and hydro projects over 1 MW, the AESO is issuing this update to provide further clarity regarding the AESO's Connection Process.

The Connection Process is the AESO's business practice for facilitating system access service to the transmission system. While the AUC process for approving power plant applications is distinctly separate, there are important relationships to the AESO's Connection Process. The role of power plant application and AUC power plant approval is as follows:

- **Connection projects:** Power plant application filing is a required deliverable of the Market Participant before the AESO will file its connection Needs Identification Document (NID). In addition, AUC power plant approval is a required deliverable for projects to move into the construction stage (stage 5) of the AESO's Connection Process.
- **Behind The Fence (BTF) projects:** AUC power plant approval is required for projects to move into the construction stage (stage 5) of the AESO's Connection Process.

During this temporary pause, the AESO will continue to progress System Access Service Requests (SASRs) on behalf of Market Participants following the established AESO Connection Process, including transitioning to the new cluster study assessments starting Sept. 1, 2023. For clarity, the inaugural cluster study assessment intake window closes on Aug. 31, 2023.

The AESO has identified two temporary exceptional circumstances that will be applied to the AESO Connection Process because of the temporary pause.

- 1) If a Market Participant has submitted a SASR for entry into the Cluster Study #1 and subsequently chooses to cancel this SASR because of the temporary pause, the AESO will refund its Cluster Study #1 processing fee under the following two conditions:
 - a. The processing fee payment was made to the AESO before Aug. 3, 2023; and,
 - b. The Market Participant cancels its SASR on or before Aug. 31, 2023. Any fees collected by the AESO associated to cluster studies that are paid after Aug. 3, 2023, will not be refunded as MPs are expected to consider the Aug. 3, 2023, government announcement in their business decisions.
- 2) For renewable projects without AUC power plant approval that meet the AESO's transitional requirements, the AESO will provide a seven-month extension to the Connection Process Stage 3 maximum gate timeline.

The transitional requirements to remain in the existing AESO Connection Process are identified in the project guideline document (<https://www.aeso.ca/assets/templates/cluster-assessments/In-Flight-Project-Guideline.pdf>).