

Introduction and Effective Date

This document outlines expectations for eligible participants with respect to earlier rate-payer group involvement for DFO load and reliability projects.

Goal

The goal of early rate-payer group involvement is to increase transparency, improve trust, optimize regulatory efficiency, and develop the most economical and cost-effective solution through timely and meaningful collaboration.

Eligibility and Criteria

- All eligible rate-payer groups can participate in early involvement on DFO load and reliability projects at the points noted in the Methodology section.
- Eligible rate-payer groups are:
 - Consumer Coalition of Alberta (CCA),
 - Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA),
 - Industrial Power Consumers Association of Alberta (IPCAA), and
 - any other groups the AESO deems eligible
- For in-flight projects, the AESO will not be retroactively introducing early rate-payer group involvement on DFO load and reliability projects that were in progress as of the publication of this document. Early rate-payer group involvement will only apply to new SASR applications after this date.

Value Proposition & Expectations

- Rate-payer groups can utilize this early opportunity to provide feedback. This feedback will help inform AESO project decisions, including alternative selection;
- The AESO acknowledges that more time and effort may be added to the early process stages and expects overall time and effort savings during the regulatory process; and
- Benefits include leveraging cumulative learnings on both sides and fostering a mutual understanding on subsequent projects

Methodology

The AESO will use the following methodology to facilitate earlier rate-payer group involvement. Communication will be provided via email from the AESO Project Manager.

Stage 1

- During Stage 1, the AESO will provide a summary to rate-payer groups of the transmission alternatives that will be considered for further study, and facilitate feedback via a comment matrix over a two-week period

- The AESO will not respond directly to feedback or questions received in comment matrices, but based on complexity and feedback from ratepayers, the AESO may facilitate a discussion with rate-payer groups on the transmission alternatives considered

Stage 2

- During Stage 2, the AESO will provide a summary of the preferred alternative decision to rate-payer groups, including rationale for ruling out each considered alternative. The AESO will facilitate feedback via a comment matrix over a two-week period
- The AESO will not respond directly to feedback or questions received in comment matrices, but based on complexity and feedback from ratepayers, the AESO may present the preferred alternative decision to rate-payer groups in a short presentation.

Measures of Success

Through regular touch points with DFOs, TFOs and rate-payer groups, the AESO will continue to evaluate progress towards achieving the defined goal and make necessary adjustments/refinements to the process as necessary as new projects move through the AESO Connection Process.

- Early rate-payer group involvement may:
 - result in a more efficient regulatory process, minimizing NID Information Requests (IRs) and written or oral AUC NID hearings;
 - maintain typical project schedules for DFO load and reliability project process; and
 - result in no new alternatives or issues being raised during AUC NID hearings

Contact

Please contact customer.connections@aeso.ca with any questions related to this *Terms of Participation*.