



Rate Regulation Initiative

Distribution Performance-Based Regulation

September 12, 2012

YUKON UTILITIES BOARD		
EXHIBIT		C3-14.
DAY	ENTERED BY	DATE
	VCG	NOV 5, 2013.

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(5)

1 Introduction and background

1. On February 26, 2010, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or Commission) began a rate regulation initiative to reform utility rate regulation in Alberta. The first stage of the rate regulation initiative is to implement a form of performance-based regulation (PBR) for electric and natural gas distribution companies in place of the existing cost of service regulatory system, usually referred to as rate base rate-of-return regulation. The second stage of the rate regulation initiative will consist of generic reviews of legal and economic issues related to utility regulation for the purpose of making the regulatory system more consistent among companies, more predictable over time and more efficient.

2. In its February 26, 2010 letter,¹ the Commission indicated that the first stage of the rate regulation initiative would apply only to the electricity and natural gas services of Alberta distribution companies under the Commission's jurisdiction. It would not apply to the electricity and natural gas services of transmission companies or to retail electricity or natural gas sales. However, if a company provided both distribution and transmission services, the company was given the option to apply to include its transmission services in its PBR proposal.

3. The procedural steps for this stage of the rate regulation initiative are set out in Appendix 3 to this decision. The division of the Commission presiding over this proceeding was Mr. Willie Grieve (chair), Mr. Mark Kolesar and Dr. Moin Yahya.

4. This decision sets out the Commission's determinations about the form of performance-based regulation that will be employed beginning in 2013 for Alberta electric and natural gas distribution companies.

1.1 The current regulatory framework

5. The utility companies to which this decision applies (the companies) are three electric distribution companies, ATCO Electric Ltd. (ATCO Electric or AE), FortisAlberta Inc. (Fortis or FAI) and EPCOR Distribution & Transmission Inc. (EPCOR or EDTI) and two gas distribution companies, ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. (ATCO Gas or AG) and AltaGas Utilities Inc. (AltaGas or AUI). The distribution and transmission service rates charged by these companies are currently regulated under a rate base rate-of-return form of cost of service regulation.

6. The Commission also regulates the distribution and transmission rates of ENMAX Power Corporation (ENMAX or EPC). In 2009, the Commission approved a formula-based ratemaking

¹ Exhibit 1.01, AUC letter of February 26, 2010.

994. The Commission determines that long-term forecasts of billing determinants as proposed by Fortis and ATCO Electric are not necessary. As identified by Fortis, the use of long-term forecasts introduces forecasting risk into the PBR plan with respect to billing determinants. Because the billing determinants are generally used to allocate items that have been determined to be exceptions to the incentive properties of PBR, the Commission considers that it is necessary to achieve a greater degree of accuracy. The Commission does not consider that the company or its customers should benefit from, or be negatively impacted by, forecasting inaccuracies that may result from using forecasts that extend well into the future. Utilizing a shorter term for the forecasts will reduce the possibility for material forecasting inaccuracies. For this reason the companies will provide a revised forecast of their billing determinants annually as part of the September 10th annual PBR rate adjustment filings. In addition, the companies will provide the billing determinants forecast to be utilized for January 1, 2013 rates as part of their compliance filings to this decision.

995. Companies will be expected to utilize forecasting methodologies that are logical and easy to understand, and in most cases this will involve the continued use of forecasting methodologies utilized prior to PBR. Companies should utilize consistent billing determinant forecasting methodologies during the PBR term unless the Commission orders otherwise. Companies will describe the methodology they plan to use for the duration of the PBR term as part of their compliance filings to this decision.

996. The Commission considers that PBR is unrelated to the requirement to periodically update rates through a Phase II process. However, during the PBR term the companies may file applications for Phase II adjustments to their rate design and cost allocation methodologies and the Commission will make a determination at that time as to whether the adjustments are warranted. For purposes of a cost of service study, the companies shall use the revenue requirement resulting from going-in rates adjusted by the PBR formula (including the I-X mechanism, K factors, Y factors and Z factors) and the latest updated billing determinants.

15.2 AUC Rule 002 and AUC Rule 005 annual filings

997. As discussed in Section 13, annual AUC Rule 005 filings will continue to be filed by the companies on May 1st for electric distribution utilities and May 15th for gas distribution utilities. In addition, a copy of the prior year AUC Rule 005 filings will be included with the September 10th annual PBR rate adjustment filing.

998. As discussed in Section 14.1, the service quality of the companies will continue to be monitored using the AUC Rule 002 process. Annual service quality filing requirements are set out in the provisions of the rule.

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15.3 Summary of annual filing dates

999. Below is a summary of the key annual filing dates under the PBR plans.

Table 15-1 Summary of key PBR annual filing requirements

Date	Action
March 1	Submission of capital tracker applications
May 1 or 15	AUC Rule 005 annual filings (May 1 for electric utilities, May 15 for gas utilities)
September 10	Companies to file annual PBR rate adjustment filings
January 1	Effective date for approved rates that are subject to the PBR formula

16 Generic proceedings

1000. During the first PBR term, the Commission will conduct a number of generic proceedings to deal with issues that arose out of the cost of service regulatory regime, some of which are still relevant to the companies under PBR. These proceedings are “generic” because the issues affect more than one company, including issues such as the recognition of debt costs or the treatment of certain income tax expenses. These generic proceedings are intended to make regulation in Alberta, including regulation of those companies that remain under cost of service regulation, more efficient and more predictable.

1001. To the extent that the decisions coming out of these generic proceedings will impact the companies under PBR, prior to the end of the PBR term, the Commission will consider any necessary rate adjustments using the mechanisms set out in Section 15.1.4 of this decision, as matters arise.

1002. The Commission will shortly issue bulletins to commence a proceeding on the generic cost of capital and to either continue Proceeding ID No. 20 with respect to Utility Asset Dispositions or initiate a generic proceeding regarding asset disposition and stranded assets. Additionally, the Commission will initiate other generic proceedings and will seek input from interested parties on additional matters parties may wish to have considered in generic proceedings, the scope of the issues to be considered, and the format for these proceedings. With regard to the latter, the Commission expects that many of these generic proceedings can take the form of consultations.