

June 25th, 2024

Honourable Danielle Smith, Premier of the Province of Alberta
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Premier,

On behalf of the Council of Kneehill County, I write to you concerning AUC Decision 28086-D01-2024 (The "Decision") issued June 12th, 2024. As a local Council, we were optimistic that the pause on renewable energy development would allow for the concerns of local authorities to be addressed within the processes and decisions of the Alberta Utility Commission. Upon review of the Decision, we noted several reasons and statements that make us feel like the pause and related work was more show than substance.

We understand that the purpose of the review was not to forbid the development of renewable energy systems. Applications would be assessed on their merits, and some would still be approved. Our expectation was not that it would be otherwise. We hoped that more of the local authority and public concerns would be given additional weight.

From the Decision, we note that the reasons for the approval included:

"The Commission expects that the loss of agricultural use of the project lands will be reversible at project end of life"

"The project will be co-located with agricultural activities, including livestock grazing and apiculture."

As Council, we question the assertion that the land can be returned to its previous agricultural capacity once it is developed. Furthermore, we do not believe there is clarity regarding what constitutes agricultural activity. Removing a cropped piece of land from production is hardly offset by placing a few sheep and some beehives on the site. We believe that far more clarity and understanding of the agricultural perspective is required, and we lack confidence that a board comprised of no one with an apparent agricultural or rural background is making these decisions.

We would ask for the Province to help provide clarity. Furthermore, as Commission members are appointed by an Order in Council, we believe it is within your ability to ensure the AUC has a rural perspective by appointing individuals with a demonstrated understanding of rural Alberta.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

Respectfully,

Ken King
Reeve, Kneehill County

cc: Hon. Nathan Neudorf, Minister of Affordability and Utilities
Hon. Brian Jean, Minister of Energy and Minerals
Hon. Rebecca Schulz, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas
Hon. Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Hon. RJ Sigurdson, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation
Hon. Nathan Cooper, MLA for Olds-Didsbury-Three Hills
Paul McLauchlin, RMA President