



ORDER NUMBER
G-150-23

IN THE MATTER OF
the *Utilities Commission Act*, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473

and

FortisBC Energy Inc.
2022 Long Term Gas Resource Plan

BEFORE:

D. M. Morton, Panel Chair
T. L. Loski, Commissioner
R. I. Mason, Commissioner
A. Pape-Salmon, Commissioner

on June 15, 2023

ORDER

WHEREAS:

- A. On May 9, 2022, FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) filed its 2022 Long Term Gas Resource Plan (LTGRP) for acceptance by the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC), pursuant to section 44.1(2) of the *Utilities Commission Act*;
- B. By Order G-99-23 dated May 1, 2023, the BCUC established an amended regulatory timetable, which included parties' submissions on need and scope for a third round of information requests (IRs) and oral hearing;
- C. On May 25, 2023, submissions were filed by FEI, BC Old Age Pensioners Organization et. al, BC Solar and Storage Industries Association, BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA), the Commercial Energy Consumers Association of BC, Movement of United Professionals (MoveUP), and Residential Consumer Intervener Association (RCIA);
- D. On June 8, 2023, reply submissions were filed by FEI, BCSEA and MoveUp; and
- E. The BCUC determines establishing an amended regulatory timetable is warranted.

NOW THEREFORE for the reasons outlined in Appendix B of this order, the BCUC establishes an amended regulatory timetable as set out in Appendix A of this order.

DATED at the City of Vancouver, in the Province of British Columbia, this 15th day of June 2023.

BY ORDER

Original signed by:

D. M. Morton
Commissioner

Attachment

FortisBC Energy Inc.
2022 Long Term Gas Resource Plan

REGULATORY TIMETABLE

Action		Date (2023)
IRs on intervener evidence		Friday, June 23
Notification of intent to file rebuttal evidence		Friday, June 30
Intervener responses to IRs on intervener evidence		Friday, July 21
Action		Date
	If no rebuttal evidence	With rebuttal evidence
Rebuttal evidence	n/a	Friday, August 18, 2023
IRs on rebuttal evidence	n/a	Friday, September 15, 2023
Response to IRs on rebuttal evidence	n/a	Friday, October 13, 2023
FEI written final argument	Thursday, August 10, 2023	Wednesday, November 1, 2023
Intervener written final argument	Thursday, September 21, 2023	Wednesday, December 13, 2023
FEI written reply argument	Thursday, October 19, 2023	Wednesday, January 17, 2024

FortisBC Energy Inc.
2022 Long Term Gas Resource Plan

REASONS FOR DECISION

1.0 Introduction

On May 9, 2022, FortisBC Energy Inc. (FEI) filed its 2022 Long Term Gas Resource Plan (LTGRP) for acceptance by the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC), pursuant to section 44.1(2) of the *Utilities Commission Act*. By Order G-99-23 dated May 1, 2023, the BCUC established an amended regulatory timetable, which included parties' submissions on need and scope for (i) a third round of information requests (IRs), and (ii) an oral hearing tentatively scheduled for the week of November 27, 2023.

On May 25, 2023, submissions were filed by FEI, BC Old Age Pensioners Organization et. al (BCOAPO), BC Solar and Storage Industries Association (BCSSIA), BC Sustainable Energy Association (BCSEA), the Commercial Energy Consumers Association of BC (CEC), Movement of United Professionals (MoveUP), and Residential Consumer Intervener Association (RCIA). On June 8, 2023, reply submissions were filed by FEI, BCSEA and MoveUP.

In these reasons for decision, the Panel summarizes parties' submissions, and outlines its determinations on the next steps for the proceeding.

2.0 Summary of Submissions

FEI's view is that neither an oral hearing nor a third round of IRs is necessary for the BCUC to complete its review of the LTGRP. FEI submits the current written record is sufficient for the purposes of reviewing FEI's LTGRP. Further, an oral hearing would be highly resource intensive for all participants, given the nature and scope of the proceeding. FEI adds the long-term planning environment is currently very dynamic, and resources would be more effectively invested in filing the next resource plan sooner, rather than protracting the current process.¹

BCSEA,² MoveUP,³ and RCIA⁴ submit that neither a third round of IRs nor an oral hearing is necessary. MoveUP submits the most compelling reason to complete this proceeding was raised by FEI at the January 19, 2023 procedural conference:

Finally, FEI submits the evidence in this proceeding is dynamic, as FEI's planning is occurring at a time of rapid evolution in government policy and technology. FEI submits rather than having an oral hearing, it would be a more effective use of resources to file the next resource plan sooner.⁵

¹ Exhibit B-33, p. 1.

² Exhibit C3-5, p.1.

³ Exhibit C1-4, p. 1.

⁴ Exhibit C6-4, p. 1.

⁵ Transcript Vol. 1, pp. 21-22.

MoveUP adds that a modified approach to Resource Planning is needed for future plans, such as more regular re-examinations and revisions.⁶

BCOAPO submits that an oral hearing is not necessary. However, given the importance, complexity and size of the record of this proceeding, BCOAPO submits that it would be beneficial if the BCUC allowed for a focused third round of IRs.⁷ In reply to BCOAPO, FEI notes BCOAPO does not identify particular topics that they suggest warrant a third round of IRs.⁸

BCSSIA submits there should be a third round of IRs, and lists several areas that should be explored. BCSSIA notes it has had the opportunity to ask only one round of IRs on the Kelowna Electrification Study and there are follow-up matters needing clarification. BCSSIA does not want to prematurely forego the opportunity of an oral hearing until it receives and analyzes the responses to its, and others', third round of IRs.⁹ In reply to BCSSIA, regarding the Kelowna Electrification Study FEI submits that this matter has been fully addressed by the current record, and that BCSSIA IRs were largely not subjects that the Kelowna Study was designed to answer. Regarding the oral hearing, FEI submits this is the second and last opportunity in the regulatory timetable to provide submissions on the need and scope for an oral hearing.¹⁰

The CEC supports a third round of IRs to further examine certain matters, which in the CEC's opinion have not been thoroughly canvassed. The CEC would also support an oral hearing process should the BCUC determine it necessary, and CEC suggests several oral hearing topics for the BCUC's consideration.¹¹ In reply to the CEC, FEI submits the FEI topics identified by the CEC have been exhaustively addressed by the current written record, and the CEC has not submitted that the topics cannot be pursued in another round of IRs or addressed in final arguments. Further, the CEC has not identified topics for a third round of IRs.¹²

Panel Determination

The Panel determines that neither a third round of IRs nor an oral hearing are warranted for the review of the 2022 LTGRP.

In making this determination, we consider that no intervener advocating for a third round of IRs has made a compelling case for why the existing evidentiary record is incomplete. Additionally, we note that only the CEC has indicated support for an oral hearing if the BCUC determines one is necessary, which the Panel does not. More generally, we acknowledge the submissions of MoveUP and agree that going forward, there is merit to shorter and more frequent long term resource plans. Accordingly, the Panel believes it is important to prioritize concluding this proceeding to minimize the risk, and the impact on regulatory efficiency, of reviewing outdated evidence, and in turn allow the Panel to provide a timely determination on the timing and content for FEI's next LTGRP.

The Panel also determines that by June 30, 2023, FEI and any other parties intending to file rebuttal evidence (in response to the intervener evidence filed by My Sea to Sky¹³) must notify the BCUC. The Panel has proposed an

⁶ Exhibit C1-4, pp. 1-3.

⁷ Exhibit C18-4, p. 1.

⁸ Exhibit B-34, p. 2.

⁹ Exhibit C7-4, p. 1-2.

¹⁰ Exhibit B-34, p. 1-2.

¹¹ Exhibit C8-4, p. 2.

¹² Exhibit B-34, p. 1-2.

¹³ Exhibit C16-6.

alternate timetable without rebuttal evidence that would further shorten the timeframe to complete the proceeding in the event rebuttal evidence is not filed. Should any parties have any concerns regarding the alternate timeline, they may also provide submissions by June 30, 2023.