



Drew Anderson <drew@thenarwhal.ca>

AESO and renewables pause

Josh Aldrich <Josh.Aldrich@gov.ab.ca>

Wed, Nov 8, 2023 at 11:16 AM

To: Drew Anderson <drew@thenarwhal.ca>, Sam Blackett <Sam.Blackett@gov.ab.ca>

Hi Drew,

Here is the statement from the Minister's Office on the matter:

"The government continuously engages with the regulators and with stakeholders to determine what is and is not working. What we heard in these discussions was that we need to gather more information on the impact to agricultural lands and reclamation issues.

The memo released and subsequent letters from AUC and AESO were sent following multiple briefings and conversations with the ministry of Affordability and Utilities.

Furthermore, since the pause was put in place, we have seen an increase in wind and solar applications to the AESO which shows investor confidence has actually been strengthened by this inquiry."

Thank you for reaching out.

Josh Aldrich

Press Secretary to Honourable Nathan Neudorf

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From: Drew Anderson <drew@thenarwhal.ca>
Sent: November 8, 2023 9:43 AM
To: Sam Blackett <Sam.Blackett@gov.ab.ca>; Josh Aldrich <Josh.Aldrich@gov.ab.ca>
Subject: AESO and renewables pause

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Hi Sam, thanks for speaking with me at the Pembina summit, and hi Josh.

I am writing a story based on documents received through a FOIP request to Affordability and Utilities on the pause on renewable projects.

There are two redacted briefing notes included in the package, both dated July 20. Here are the details and the questions will follow below.

This request is time sensitive.

CONTEXT/CONTENT:

One is from AESO for the minister which says the grid manager “has been advised that the Government of Alberta is considering the implementation of a temporary six-month ‘pause’ on the approval of all generation power plant applications.”

It then says: “If the Ministry of Affordability and Utilities moves forward with implementing a ‘pause,’ the AESO offers the following insights for consideration to minimize unintended consequences.”

Those insights are redacted.

The second briefing note is from within the ministry, also dated July 20, and in preparation for a meeting, the details of which have been redacted. It is clear it is with someone involved in renewable energy projects in Alberta.

There is a section titled: "If asked about the pause on approvals of renewable electricity projects:"

That section lists, in detail, what the government plans to do, echoing what was announced to the public (and industry) two weeks later on Aug. 3.

QUESTIONS:

For premier:

1. You said, when this pause was announced, that it was based on requests from AESO and AUC, and the letters that were attached to the news release. Those did not ask for the pause and were dated one day after the briefing notes in question. These documents clearly indicate the government had already solidified its plans and has simply informed AESO. Why did you lie about the reasons for announcing the pause?
2. When and why did the government decide to pause renewable project approvals?
3. We know it wasn't the AUC, AESO or the RMA who asked for the pause, so who asked for the pause?
4. Who did the government consult prior to this pause?

For Minister Neudorf:

1. You told the Canadian Press in August that the decision wasn't based on the letters alone. You then say the letters followed multiple briefings and meetings with the ministry. If that's true, then why were those meetings and briefing not supplied to The Narwhal for FOIP request AU000-2023-G-7 and will you now provide those materials as requested?
2. If that's not true, then why did you once again lie about the reasons for the pause and the events leading up to it?
3. The briefing notes make it clear this decision was made well in advance of the Aug. 3 announcement. When were the details of the pause, as outlined on July 20 and announced on Aug. 3, drafted?
4. Why did the government decide to pause renewable energy projects and why?
5. Why did the government lie about the reasons for announcing the pause?
6. What did AESO recommend in order to minimize unintended consequences in their briefing on July 20?
7. Did the government listen to those recommendations?
8. What were the unintended consequences and have they been averted?

--

Drew Anderson

Alberta/Saskatchewan reporter

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