



WATERPOWER FACILITIES

An increased emphasis on renewable energy sources is a key step in the Ontario Government's climate change action plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy generation and conservation and create thousands of green jobs in Ontario. The Renewable Energy Approval does not apply to waterpower projects.

A renewable energy source

The approach to the environmental review of waterpower facilities was streamlined in 2008 with the introduction of the Class Environmental Assessment for Waterpower Projects (Class EA). Waterpower facilities do not require a Renewable Energy Approval. Waterpower facilities are unique by comparison to other types of renewable energy generation facilities as they have site-specific engineering considerations. The current rules for waterpower facilities are customized with clear requirements for considering environmental impacts and working with communities to design better projects in cooperation with government.

Provincial approval for waterpower facilities

The Class EA for Waterpower Projects (October 2008) is the source document for understanding the rules governing the development of waterpower facilities.

Waterpower facilities must also obtain the existing permits and approvals required from the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Ministries of the Environment and Natural Resources in consultation with the Federal Government will continue to work with the waterpower sector to align approval processes and, where appropriate, reduce the regulatory burden and further streamline approvals processes.



General Information

The Class EA for Waterpower Projects was developed by the Ontario Waterpower Association (OWA). It was approved by the Minister of the Environment and the Lieutenant Governor in Council in 2008.

The Class EA requires applicants to consider the positive and negative potential effects of a proposed project, and the significance of each potential level of effect. Common and/or important issues identified in the Class EA involve fish and fish habitat, water levels and flows, and competing or complementary interests of nearby land owners, water-resource users and water-related natural resource users.

The Class EA only applies to waterpower projects less than 200 megawatts. Projects 200 megawatts or more are subject to an individual EA.

Consultation

Consultation is mandatory and depends on the type of project. Generally, consultation is required at the initial planning stage, during the process, and at completion of the environmental assessment documentation. Consultation can be through a combination of newspaper advertisements, direct mail, internet and email, public information centres, meetings/workshops, site visit and advisory committees. The Class EA outlines a distinct requirement for engaging Aboriginal communities with a potential interest in the project.

To learn more, visit:

Ministry of the Environment

www.ene.gov.on.ca

Renewable Energy Facilitation Office

1-877-440-REFO (7336)

REFO@ontario.ca



Appealing a Project

Projects must successfully follow the requirements of the Class EA. Any person who believes there are outstanding issues or concerns may request a Part II Order. A Part II Order, if granted by the Minister of the Environment, would make the project subject to an individual environmental assessment. The Minister may also deny the request with or without conditions or refer the request to mediation.

Requests for Part II Orders can be made during the public comment period following the applicant's issuance of a Notice of Completion of their Class EA documentation.

Ontario Waterpower Association (OWA)

The OWA is responsible for:

- Providing education and best practice guidance to applicants
- Reporting to the Ministry of the Environment on the application of the Class EA on an annual basis
- Overseeing requests to alter the Class EA process

For more information about the Class EA for Waterpower Projects, visit the OWA website at www.owa.ca.

