# CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

**Date:** November 13, 2024, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
**Council Co-leads:**
*Ecology:* Joenne McGerr, Diane Butorac, Mark Daniel, Andrew Hollenbaugh
*Commerce:* Michael Furze, Aaron Peterson, Dan Siemann, Rebecca Ponzio, Monica Bramble, Valerie Smith, Nora Hawkins
**Council members:** *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *EFSEC:* Stewart Henderson, Lisa McLean; *EJ Council:* Jonathan Chen; *ORIA:* Dan McConnon; *UTC:* Payton Swinford, Heather Moline; *WDFW:* Ben Blank, Michael Ritter, Michelle Huppert, Emily Grabowsky; *WSDA:* Julia Terlinchamp; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam, Gretchen Coker
**Invited Participants:** Karen Janowitz, WSU

**Solar and Onshore Wind updates**

Karen Janowitz (WSU Energy Program) provided an overview of the WSU Least-Conflict Solar Siting Project. Through engagement with Tribes and interested parties, groups conducted a spatial assessment of the Columbia Plateau for solar energy suitability and potential conflict with conservation, farmland, and rangeland values. There is no single map, rather WSU provided information for multiple uses by developers, agencies, and interested parties. Completed June 2023. Information and access to the mapping tool are available here: https://www.energy.wsu.edu/RenewableEnergy/LeastConflictSolarSiting.aspx

WDFW (Michael Ritter, Michelle Huppert, and Emily Grabowsky) presented on WDFW's work to develop guidelines for utility-scale solar and update guidelines for onshore wind projects. The project began in January 2024, with external engagement starting in April, which included five stakeholder workshops and four Tribal forums throughout the process. The agency received feedback throughout and provided draft guidelines for review in September 2024. The guidance is conservation focused and science based. The document includes process steps, starting with exploratory planning through assessing wildlife and habitat on the project site. It includes measures for minimization and mitigation, including spatiotemporal buffers for construction and operation, and cumulative impacts assessment. They plan to finalize the guidelines by January 2025.

Mark Daniel, ECY, provided an update on the Solar and Onshore Wind Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEISs). A PEIS is a planning document, it does not evaluate specific projects. It provides information for use by developers, State Environmental Policy Act lead agencies, Tribes, interested parties, and the public. Scoping was completed in fall 2023 and drafts were released for public review and comment in September 2024. The analyses considered the WSU least conflict siting studies, WDFW guidelines, and the Bureau of Land Management PEIS. He provided an overview of the documents, the areas evaluated and the findings. Information is available on Ecology's webpage: https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/clean-energy/programmatic-eis.

The Council discussed the presentations, opportunities for engagement by communities and Tribes, and opportunities to coordinate across agencies and projects. DAHP's predictive model will be completed in the next months for inclusion in the PEISs.

### Clean Energy Preferred Zones

RCW 43.21C.535 (HB 1216) requires the Clean Energy Siting Council to consider the findings of the clean energy PEISs and make recommendations on potential areas to designate as Clean Energy Preferred Zones (CEPZs) and related incentives. This work is also a recommendation in the Clean Energy Siting Council 2024 legislative report. Council members discussed how these might be defined and types of clean energy these zones could be used for. Robust community engagement and Tribal consultation will be critical to this work. This is planned for further discussion at future meetings.

### Agency updates

DAHP predictive model will be ready in the next months and DAHP is working on cultural resources on state lands. WSDA informed the group that funding has been released for agrivoltaics study.

| **ACTION ITEMS** | | | |
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| **Responsible** | **Action** | **Start Date** | **Due Date** |
| | None | | |