CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

Date: January 14, 2026, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Council Co-leads:
Ecology: Joenne McGerr, Diane Butorac, Brenden McFarland, Alex Shin, Amelia Fujikawa
Commerce: Dan Siemann, Nora Hawkins, Alden Andy, Brady Kent, Mary Miller, Shannon Pressler, Stephanie Scott, Valerie Smith, Deanah Watson, Monica Bramble, Talia Mirel
Council members: *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Jim Woodward, Zoe Mullendore; *EFSEC:* Lisa McLean; *EJ Council:* Sierra Rotakhina, Jonathan Chen; *GOIA:* JT Austin; *GOV:* Kate Brouns; *UTC:* Payton Swinford; *WDFW:* Megan Kernan, Ben Blank; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam

Welcome and introductions

The Council welcomed Megan Kernan (WDFW) as a new member. Nora Hawkins (Commerce), who is currently serving as the interim Commerce Energy Policy Director, is now Commerce's Siting Council co-lead.

Governor's Office Update
Kate Brouns (Governor's Office) shared updates about Governor Ferguson's State of the State Address and proposed 2026 supplemental budget. She discussed challenges and opportunities relating to this year's budget. Priority energy topics for this legislative session include data centers, transmission, and permitting.

Governor's Executive Order 25-11

Kate Brouns, Dan Siemann (Commerce), and Diane Butorac (Ecology) provided an update related to Governor Ferguson's Executive Order 25-11, which was signed on December 16. The executive order called for creation of a Joint Clean Energy Acceleration Team (JCEAT) chaired by Commerce and including Ecology, EFSEC, and the UTC. Prior to the January 1 deadline, the JCEAT published a list of utility-scale onshore wind and solar projects under development in Washington that have submitted a formal State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) application as of November 2025. The JCEAT is coordinating with GOIA to engage with sovereign Tribal nations whose rights or interests may be impacted. All agencies subject to the executive order are required to submit an update to the Governor's Office by January 30. The Governor's Office will coordinate with the Attorney General's Office, WDFW, DNR, and the state legislature.

Clean Hydrogen and E-Fuels Technical Assistance Program and RFI
Shannon Pressler (Commerce) presented updates about a new technical assistance program for strategic end-users of hydrogen that's currently being developed by Commerce's Office of Renewable Fuels (ORF). Washington state has demonstrated interested in supporting the production and use of green electrolytic hydrogen and other renewable fuels as part of the state's transition to a net-zero economy. Commerce's

legislative report, Green Electrolytic Hydrogen and Renewable Fuels: Recommendations for Deployment in Washington, includes modeling that identifies which sectors are likely to need green electrolytic hydrogen and renewable fuels in the coming decades, including displacing fossil-derived hydrogen in oil refining, heavy-duty transportation and off-road mobility, industrial processes, and others. The primary goal of the program is to advance the adoption of hydrogen and hydrogen-derived fuels and products in Washington across strategic demand sectors in the near-term. The program is funded through the 2025-27 operating budget and is expected to be implemented through June 30, 2027.

The Office of Renewable Fuels recently closed a public request for information (RFI) opportunity that ran from early December through Wednesday, January 7, 2026. The RFI received nearly 60 responses, which included diverse and robust input that will help inform key program scope and delivery details, including which entities are eligible to receive technical assistance, what end-use sectors will be included and prioritized, and what kind(s) of technical assistance will be provided. Commerce is currently assessing this feedback and is developing an initial program scope with the intention of publicly launching in spring 2026. Additional information about the program and its official launch will be shared in the coming months.

Energy Workforce Development

Stephanie Scott (Commerce) shared an update on the Electrical Transmission Workforce legislative report, which is anticipated to be released in early 2026. The report, led by Commerce and guided by a labor and utility workgroup convened at the direction of the legislature, focuses on line workers, substation technicians, and line-clearance tree trimmers. Workforce projections indicate that meeting clean energy targets will require far greater workforce growth than the current project pipeline will develop. Because these trades depend on extensive on-the-job training, active transmission projects and expanded apprenticeship capacity are essential. The presentation underscored the need to reduce barriers to entry and invest in inclusive training pathways to build a resilient workforce for Washington's clean energy future.

Tribal and Interested Party Workshops Results

Talia Mirel (Commerce/AmeriCorps CivicSpark) presented an overview of the Council Tribal and Interested Party workshops hosted in December. Workshop participants included six Tribes and Tribal organizations; energy developers; federal, state, and local government; utilities; non-profits and advocacy organizations; and interested citizens. Participants shared their perspectives on problems that constrain clean energy development, suggestions for improving siting and permitting of clean energy and transmission, and ideas for future Council discussion topics. These insights will inform Council priorities and the next annual legislative report.

Training for Energy Developers on Tribal Consultation and Engagement Processes

Dan Siemann (Commerce) shared updates about the training for energy developers on Tribal consultation and engagement required by HB 1216. Council members discussed the intent and approaches to develop and share the training.

Legislative Session Roundtable

Council members discussed the state legislative session which began on January 12. Legislative proposals related to clean energy siting and permitting include transmission, land use, state and Tribal government-to-government relations, clean energy tax policy, EFSEC processes, permitting review processes, state clean energy laws, advanced nuclear, and solar co-location.

Agency Updates

Agencies provided updates on agency clean energy efforts both planned and in progress.