# CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

**Date:** February 11th, 2026, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
**Council Co-leads:**
*Ecology:* Joenne McGerr, Alex Shin, Amelia Fujikawa
*Commerce:* Dan Siemann, Nora Hawkins, Shannon Pressler, Valerie Smith, Deanah Watson, Monica Bramble, Talia Mirel, Radi Simeonova, Brady Kent
**Council members:** *AGR:* Alison Halpern; *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Jim Woodward, Zoe Mullendore; *EFSEC:* Amí Hafkemeyer*;* Lisa McLean; *EJ Council:* Sierra Rotakhina, Jonathan Chen; *GOV:* Kate Brouns; *ORIA:* Jim Thornton; *UTC:* Heather Moline; Payton Swinford; *WDFW:* Megan Kernan, Ben Blank; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam

**Governor's Office Update**
Kate Brouns shared updates about the legislative session. She discussed key themes including Climate Commitment Act spending and Tribal sovereignty and cultural resource protections. In addition, the office has been meeting with clean energy developers to discuss early outreach and pre-application processes. The office is also engaged on nuclear energy topics.

**Governor's Executive Order 25-11**

Dan Siemann (Commerce) provided an update on Executive Order 25-11. The Joint Clean Energy Acceleration Team (JCEAT) met on January 26 to review the utility-scale onshore wind and solar project list, discuss outreach and project inquiries from project developers, and coordination with GOIA. Agencies subject to the order submitted updates to the Governor's office by the deadline. The JCEAT is also considering development of clean energy project map to support the executive order.

**Agency presentations on active engagement with prospective clean energy developers**

Agencies were invited to present to the Council on ways that they are actively engaging with clean energy developers and sharing information. The Council heard from Commerce, ORIA, Ecology, and EFSEC.

Commerce: Radi Simeonova from the Office of Economic Development and Competitiveness (ODEC)

Radi reviewed the Business Development core services, which support new businesses in Washington by providing tax incentive and policy support, administering several grants and programs, and providing discretionary funds. The office promotes Washington state at national and internation conferences and trade shows, and hosts events for interested groups around the state. Radi reviewed clean energy projects that the OEDC has supported, including ocean carbon capture, tidal, battery storage, green fertilizers, and

alternative jet fuel. She also noted that several clean energy projects were interested in siting in Washington, but those projects could not move forward due to insufficient power availability in the state, resulting in loss of economic growth. Other states are facing similar power challenges, with some states better positioned to respond on this issue.

Commerce: Dan Siemann from the Energy Policy Office

Dan shared that the Energy Policy Office engages with clean energy developers through fielding inquiries through the executive order (25-11). The Energy Policy Office also attends conferences and engages with developers in those settings.

Office of Regulatory Innovation and Assistance (ORIA): Jim Thornton, Environmental Permitting Coordinator

Jim discussed ORIA's regulatory authority in RCW 43.42 in which they provide environmental permitting guidance, project scoping, and support in the coordinated permitting process. They maintain a list of developers to actively engage with in siting projects in Washington. ORIA can assist developers by completing an Environmental Characteristics and Constraints Analysis for their proposal. This analysis includes information on the federal, state, and local permit requirements, maps, parcels, and environmental characteristics (i.e., land use, streams and wetlands, habitat, species, archeological and cultural resources). The analysis also outlines necessary pre-permitting activities such as site studies, proposed mitigation, and land preparations.

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC): Amí Hafkemeyer

Amí discussed EFSEC's new webpage and content that will be live soon to promote the transmission PEIS and pre-application. The webpage will include an electronic version of the transmission PEIS (e-Programmatic) and tools to encourage pre-application discussions. These tools were made using feedback from developers. In addition, EFSEC and Ecology are working on joint PEIS outreach and training for local planning departments, with future plans to expand this to developers, industry groups, and other interested parties.

Department of Ecology: Alex Shin

Alex discussed Ecology's early planning process for clean energy projects which launched last fall. The process provides developers with free planning meetings with experts at Ecology to provide an early review of the project, identify potential issues and ways to avoid and minimize impacts, and answer permitting questions. In addition, Ecology's PEIS webpage provides helpful resources via toolkits and focus sheets. Ecology also maintains a clean energy interested parties mailing list where they send quarterly clean energy newsletters and announce topic specific participation opportunities, presentations, and updates. Ecology also gives presentations about their work at conferences and industry group meetings.

**Agency presentations on the pre-application process**

Agencies were invited to present to the Council on their pre-application processes and permit coordination with developers. The Council heard from DAHP, EFSEC, Ecology, and WDFW.

Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP): Dr. Allyson Brooks

Dr. Allyson Brooks reviewed DAHP's Climate Commitment Act pre-application process. DAHP receives email requests to meet with potential developers and go over what potential issues there could be with the defined project area. The process will differ depending on what state and federal laws a project is subject to. They also meet directly with developers and industry groups to review Washington's cultural resource requirements and processes. DAHP encourages developers to conduct early outreach with Tribes and provides information on the Tribal consultation process. DAHP also maintains the Washington Information System for Architectural and Archaeological Records Data (WISAARD), which is a mapping platform that developers can use in early planning to identify known historic and cultural resources and modeling for archaeological risk.

Department of Ecology: Alex Shin

Ecology's pre-application processes for clean energy projects includes the early planning process, State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review, and permit specific inquiries. Ecology encourages early engagement with developers and has found that many potential issues can be resolved early on through site or design choices. Pre-application needs are unique to each project and permit, as Ecology regulates multiple resources, each with specific information needs and timing considerations. If Ecology is the SEPA lead or a project uses the early planning process, there are multiple early discussions with an applicant. Where Ecology is not the SEPA lead, they may comment during the local government SEPA process on a technical aspect of the proposal or to clarify what Ecology permits may be required. For complex projects with multiple permits needs, they establish a central point of contact who coordinates across programs and with the developer to share information and provide consolidated feedback.

EFSEC: Amí Hafkemeyer

EFSEC offers pre-application and is working to formalize the process to support more robust engagement with developers early on in project development. The pre-application process is broad, and the goal is to have more complete applications submitted. They have developed a pre-application form that is meant to be iterative. As developers are working to gather project information and prepare application materials, they can update the form with additional information and are prompted to have discussions with EFSEC. These discussions will help the developer identify what project information and studies are needed and prepare for the required SEPA analysis. EFSEC is also developing a toolkit with

a list of agencies that developers should engage with and links to other information to consider, like Ecology's PEISs and WDFW's wind and solar guidelines.

Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW): Ben Blank

Ben Blank discussed how WDFW provides feedback to developers through early engagement and later to the permitting authorities after projects start the permitting process. The new solar and wind guidelines have helped developers understand the process and how to consult with experts at WDFW early on. When a developer reaches out for information, they coordinate internally and with the regional biologist to identify potential concerns, share data and information on species and habitats, and discuss mitigation requirements. Early engagement with WDFW can help avoid issues early on and results in better outcomes for developers and the environment.

**Geothermal Collaborative Process: Alex Shin**

To support the state's transition to clean energy, the 2024 Washington Legislature passed Senate Bill 6039 directing Ecology to lead a geothermal collaborative process to identify risks and opportunities associated with developing geothermal energy resources in Washington. The process is looking at three geothermal energy technologies: conventional, advanced and enhanced systems. An update on the process is due to the governor and Legislature on June 30, 2026, and final report is due June 30, 2027. The effort includes working closely with experts from the DAHP, Commerce, WDFW, DNR, and EFSEC. In-person workshops are planned for February and March in the three focus areas identified by DNR as having geothermal resource potential: Mount. Baker, Mount. St. Helens, and the Wind River valley. A virtual statewide workshop in March will report on what was heard at the in-person workshops and discuss next steps. Ecology and DNR are also conducting technical research and studies to better understand geothermal technologies, potential impacts, regulatory gaps, and seismic hazards. The research will be shared later this fall.

**Council logistics and schedule for 2026**

Alex reviewed upcoming 2026 meeting schedule, a refresher on what is on the Council's website, and how information is shared and stored as a Council. She also reviewed the proposed topics for the year and opened discussion around clean energy policy tracking external to Washington.

Talia (Commerce) reviewed the proposed schedule for the 2026 legislative report and interested parties and Tribal workshop schedule.

**Leg session roundtable**

The Council reviewed legislative proposals related to clean energy siting and permitting that are currently being considered in the state legislature.

**Agency Updates**

Agencies provided updates on agency clean energy efforts both planned and in progress. Commerce is continuing to work with Ecology, DAHP, EFSEC, and GOIA on a Tribal consultation and engagement training for clean energy project developers. UTC shared an update on a utility request for proposals for clean energy.