CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

Date: March 11, 2026, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Council co-leads:
Ecology: Joenne McGerr, Diane Butorac, Alex Shin, Amelia Fujikawa
Commerce: Dan Siemann, Nora Hawkins, Talia Mirel, Monica Bramble, Valerie Smith, Deanah Watson

Council members: *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Zoe Mullendore, Jim Woodward; *EFSEC:* Lisa McLean; Sean Greene; *EJ Council:* Sierra Rotakhina, Jonathan Chen; *GOIA:* JT Austin; *ORIA:* Rafael Fernandez; *UTC:* Payton Swinford; *WDFW:* Megan Kernan, Ben Blank; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam
Guests: *DNR:* Scott Nelson

Governor's Executive Order 25-11 update
Dan Siemann (Commerce) updated the group on Executive Order 25-11. The Joint Clean Energy Acceleration Team (JCEAT) continues to meet monthly and is focused on supporting clean energy developers' efforts to qualify for federal tax credits before the credits expire in July 2026. This month, GOIA joined the JCEAT, which also includes EFSEC, the UTC, Ecology and Commerce.

Transmission permitting discussion
Dan Siemann provided context regarding transmission in Washington, including reports of an expected 30% increase in energy demand by 2035 and transmission capacity limitations that affect in-state generation projects as well as access to electricity from out-of-state sources. He also discussed recent transmission planning that included the WestTEC 10-year Horizon portfolio, tribal assessment efforts led by Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) and Commerce's efforts to develop a framework for engaging overburdened communities on transmission.

Sean Greene (EFSEC) then summarized EFSEC's final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for transmission. Based on comments from the public draft, EFSEC distinguished the analysis based on different types of projects, including new construction, upgrades to existing lines, and minor modifications of existing lines. EFSEC seeks to engage early with developers through a pre-application process to ensure developers understand the range of potential requirements, reviews, tribal engagement, and other state agencies that will be involved. EFSEC considers PEISs as the first step in a phased SEPA review.

The group then completed a scenario walk-through exercise and discussed the role or process each agency would undertake if a transmission line project were proposed in the state. Agency staff raised considerations related to their areas of expertise, for example the WSDOT Utilities Accommodation Policy. The council considered topics including SEPA categorical exemptions, tribal consultation and engagement, eminent domain, wildfire risk, permitting across multiple jurisdictions, and coordination with Bonneville Power Administration for federal transmission lines.

Legislative session wrap-up

The council had a preliminary discussion about the Washington state legislative session, which was scheduled to complete the following day. Council members discussed bills related to clean energy siting and permitting that passed, topics that remain to be addressed through legislation, and priorities for agency coordination going forward.

Annual report planning

Dan Siemann facilitated a discussion about planning for the annual council legislative report, which is due October 1. Council members discussed ideas for improving the report's usefulness and effectiveness, the process for developing recommendations, the overall report timeline, and how to access agency expertise. Commerce, as the lead agency for writing the report this year, will coordinate the process for agency contributions to the report.

Agency updates

DAHP and Ecology each shared news about recent national awards they received. Ecology also provided updates from recent workshops for the Geothermal Collaborative Process; a draft legislative report is due in June 2026, and the final recommendations are due in June 2027.