CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

Date: March 12, 2025, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Council Co-leads:
Ecology: Joenne McGerr, Diane Butorac, Brenden McFarland, Alex Shin, Amelia Fujikawa
Commerce: Glenn Blackmon, Dan Siemann, Deanah Watson
Council members: *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Kate Dean, Jim Woodward; *EFSEC:* Sonia Bumpus, Stewart Henderson, Lisa McLean; *EJ Council:* Sierra Rotakhina, Jonathan Chen; *GOIA:* JT Austin; *GOV:* Kate Brouns; *UTC:* Heather Moline; *WDFW:* Ben Blank; *WSDA:* Julia Terlinchamp; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam, Gretchen Coker
Invited Guests: Monica Bramble (COM)

Governor's Office and Legislative Updates
Kate Brouns provided an update from the Governor's Office on policy priorities, including transmission and data centers. Agencies provided updates on clean energy bills and key legislative dates.

PEIS Updates and implementation
Alex Shin, Senior Planner at Ecology, provided an update on the programmatic environmental impact statements (PEISs). The legislature directed Ecology to develop three PEISs for utility-scale solar, utility-scale onshore wind, and green electrolytics and renewable hydrogen (RCW 43.21C.535). PEISs evaluate probable significant environmental impacts of clean energy technologies and provide consistency and transparency for project reviews. All three Draft PEIS comment periods are complete, and Ecology is working to finalize the content of the PEISs by the legislative deadline of June 30, 2025. Ecology is also developing guidance tools for implementing the PEISs. Ecology held several workshops and forums throughout the process to gather input on the PEISs and guidance tools from Tribes, developers, local governments, and organizations.

Clean Energy Projects of Statewide Significance
Monica Bramble, Industrial Siting Program Manager at Commerce, provided a presentation on the Clean Energy Projects of Statewide Significance (CEPSS) program (RCW 43.158.020). The CEPSS program creates a designation for significant clean energy projects at the state level and sets out various categories of clean energy facilities and guidelines to distinguish projects that help create prosperous and sustainable economies in Washington. While the CEPSS designation signifies Commerce's recognition of the project, it does not include funding, and it does not influence project siting or permitting decisions. Applicants must meet requirements and have had outreach with Tribes, other state agencies and stakeholders. Application review follows specific timelines with input from natural resources agencies and other state agencies identified as likely to have a role in siting or permitting a project. A soft launch of the program is currently being planned.

Siting Council Engagement and Legislative Report
The Council discussed engagement plans with interested parties and Tribes. Agency comments on the draft Tribal engagement plan are being reviewed and will be discussed at the next Council meeting.

The Council is beginning to prepare for the 2025 annual legislative report by reviewing the 2024 legislative report recommendations and providing status updates on agency work related to the recommendations.

Impacts to state agencies from federal energy policy changes

Agencies provided updates on impacts to state agency clean energy work from recent federal energy policy changes. Impacts discussed included changes to federal funding and staffing, changes in priorities for energy types, federal permitting pauses or delays, and changes to environmental and cultural resource regulations and policies. Agencies are coordinating with the Governor's Office on these changes.

Agency updates

Agencies provided general working updates on current projects. The Council recognized departing member Steward Henderson (EFSEC).

ACTION ITEMS			
Responsible	**Action**	**Start Date**	**Due Date**
All	Review agency comments on Tribal engagement plan	3/13	3/26
All	Add to list of clean energy related agency newsletters and distribution lists	3/13	3/28
All	Review 2024 annual legislative report recommendations and add status updates to tracking sheet	3/13	3/28
Co-leads	Share information on interested party engagement plan with Council; send invitation for interested party workshop in April		Late March/Early April