CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

Date: April 8, 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
Council members: *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Zoe Mullendore; *EFSEC:* Lisa McLean, Keith Quinata; *EJ Council:* Jonathan Chen; *GOV:* Kate Brouns; *UTC:* Payton Swinford, Heather Moline; *WDFW:* Megan Kernan, Ben Blank; *WSDOT:* Ahmer Nizam
Guests: *Ecology:* Marrissa Smith; Carrie Sessions *Commerce:* Shannon Pressler; Stephanie Celt; Rebecca Ponzio; Aidan Garrity; *DNR:* Scott Nelson

The council welcomed new council member, Keith Quinata, Deputy Director of Siting and Compliance Siting and Compliance with EFSEC.

Governor's Executive Order 25-11 Update
Dan Siemann, Commerce, provided an update on the Joint Clean Energy Acceleration Team (JCEAT) and the current wind and solar project list.

Legislative session wrap-up
Diane Butorac, Ecology, provided an update on the legislative session which resulted in several changes affecting energy policy, Tribal consultation, and transmission planning. HB 1960 restructures tax policy for renewable energy projects by removing the personal property tax exemption for large solar, wind, and battery energy storage systems over 10 MW and creating a new energy excise tax. Revenue from this tax will primarily fund grants to local governments, with remaining funds supporting Ecology's Tribal Capacity Grant Program and the state General Fund. The bill also directs the Department of Commerce to develop a model ordinance that local governments must adopt to qualify for these grants. HB 2496 updates EFSEC procedures by removing the Open Public Meeting Act requirement for meetings of a quorum of the EFSEC council and a Tribe for purpose of government-to-government consultation.

Two bills relate to utilities and transmission. SB 5982 adds port districts to the definition of consumer-owned utilities under the Clean Energy Transformation Act. SB 6355 establishes the Washington Electric Transmission Authority initially within the Department of Commerce to support transmission planning and project development. It also requires Commerce to identify high-priority transmission corridors by October 2027. In addition, it tasks the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs—working with Commerce and Ecology—with developing recommendations for a Tribal consultation framework for transmission projects by December 1, 2026.

Legislative report planning

Dan Siemann, Commerce, discussed the upcoming structure for agency contributions to the council's annual legislative report. The council also reviewed the recommendations developed over the past two years. Dan outlined opportunities for the council to engage further in the legislative report over the summer, as well as during the Tribal and interested party forums later in April.

Governor's Office update

Kate Brouns, Governor's Office, provided updates on the legislative session.

Legislative perspectives

The council welcomed two agency legislative specialists, Carrie Sessions, Ecology, and Rebecca Ponzio, Commerce, who joined to provide feedback on the council's legislative reports to date. The council will take this feedback and incorporate it in future reports.

Transmission siting and permitting

Diane Butorac, Ecology, provided an overview of the Bonneville Power Administration's recent reports on transmission queues, grid expansion, and future planning.

Nora Hawkins, Commerce, provided an update on the new Washington Electric Transmission Authority (WETA) established in Senate Bill 6355. WETA is tasked with planning, siting, developing, and financing transmission infrastructure to efficiently expand electricity transmission capacity. A board of directors is expected to be identified by January and will need Senate confirmation. GOIA, in coordination with Commerce and Ecology, will lead development of recommendations for a Tribal consultation framework regarding statewide transmission planning and implementation. A legislative report is due December 1, 2026.

Alex Shin, Ecology, reviewed past council discussions related to improving transmission siting and permitting. Some topics included land use restrictions, coordination across multiple jurisdictions, wildfire risks, and Tribal consultation and engagement. These themes could inform future council recommendations for the upcoming report.

Environmental Justice Toolkit for Clean Energy Projects

Amelia Fujikawa, Ecology, introduced the plan for a new council workgroup that will develop an Environmental Justice Toolkit for clean energy projects. It will build on Commerce's Environmental Justice Toolkit for hydrogen project developers and expand the recommendations and best practices to be applicable to more clean energy project types. The council discussed tentative workgroup expectations, project scope, public engagement, and timeline. The workgroup is expected to begin meeting in May.

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

ACTION ITEMS			
Responsible	**Action**	**Start Date**	**Due Date**
All	Provide information for the annual report using agency template	March 19	June 11
Ecology	Kickoff council workgroup for Environmental Justice toolkit for clean energy projects	May	-