CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL SUMMARY

Date: July 9th, 2025, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.
Council Co-leads:
Ecology: Joenne McGerr, Diane Butorac, Alex Shin, Amelia Fujikawa, Brenden McFarland
Commerce: Glenn Blackmon, Dan Siemann, George Lynch, Valerie Smith, Jennifer Grove
Council members: *DAHP:* Allyson Brooks; *DNR:* Kate Dean, Jim Woodward; *EFSEC:* Sonia Bumpus; Lisa McLean; *EJ Council:* Sierra Rotakhina, Jonathan Chen; *GOIA:* JT Austin; *GOV:* Kate Brouns; *UTC:* Payton Swinford, Heather Moline; *WDFW:* Ben Blank; *WSDA:* Alison Halpern

Guest: Director of Ecology, Casey Sixkiller

Update from Director of Ecology, Casey Sixkiller
The Director of Ecology, Casey Sixkiller, joined the Council meeting to share his thoughts on the work of the Council and the legislative report recommendations. He expressed appreciation for the Council's work and focus on issues related to land use policy, permitting challenges, and coordination between state and federal review processes. He discussed the importance of focusing on what steps can be taken in the near-term to help move clean energy projects forward and the importance of working with communities and Tribes to address concerns and staying consistent with existing regulations. Efficient environmental reviews and improving interagency coordination were highlighted as key opportunities. The director also emphasized the importance of carefully prioritizing efforts, especially when it comes to long-term initiatives.

Utility request for proposal process
Heather Moline, Energy Policy Advisor to the Commissioners at the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), provided background on the request for proposals process in WAC 480-107, which occurs when investor-owned utilities request bids from developers, utilities or organizations to provide energy or capacity. Heather provided context on the agency's involvement in selecting or rejecting bids, approving evaluators, and scoring bids. Heather also discussed how the process relates to the utilities' Integrated Resource Plans in WAC 480-100-620 that look at needs over the next 20 years. The Council discussed how clean energy projects are evaluated in this process and ways that the Council could further support the UTC, in particular by talking in more detail through ways these processes could support more efficient and effective clean energy siting.

SEPA categorical exemptions
Brenden McFarland, Environmental Review and Transportation Section Manager at Ecology provided an overview of State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) categorical exemptions. Categorical exemptions mean that when a project meets certain requirements under the SEPA rule, it does not need to complete a full environmental review under SEPA. Brenden discussed how SEPA categorical exemptions differ from federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) categorical exclusions, and how they could pertain to clean energy projects and transmission.

Council Legislative report discussion

The Council co-leads facilitated a discussion on the draft recommendations for the 2025 legislative report. The draft recommendations were informed by input from workshops with interested parties and Tribes. Council members provided feedback on the recommendations and topics to advance the document for public comment. The co-leads discussed the report schedule and next steps, including a 30-day comment period on the draft recommendations and two question and answer (Q&A) sessions for interested parties and Tribes.

ACTION ITEMS			
Responsible	**Action**	**Start Date**	**Due Date**
Co-leads	Release draft recommendations for 30-day comment period through August 16th	7/9/25	7/16/25
Co-leads	Schedule draft recommendations Q&A sessions for Tribes and interested parties in early August	7/9/25	7/16/25