CLEAN ENERGY SITING COUNCIL

Date: August 1, 2023

Attendees: Joenne McGerr (ECY), Brenden McFarland (ECY), Diane Butorac (ECY), Glenn Blackmon (COM), Brian Young (COM), Nora Hawkins (COM), Aaron Peterson (COM), Allyson Brooks (DAHP), Sierra Rotakhina (EJ Council), Craig Bill (GOIA), Becky Kelley (GOV), Csenka F.C. (DNR), Natalie Waid (DNR), Jim Woodward (DNR), Jim Thornton (ORIA), Heather Moline (UTC), Samantha Doyle (UTC), Benjamin Blank (WDFW), Gary Bahr (WSDA)

ACTION ITEMS			
Responsible	**Action**	**Start Date**	**Due Date**
All	Provide bullets for Ecology's clean energy coordination meetings	8/1/23	8/4/23
All	Provide bullets about clean energy siting and permitting work your agency is doing now or preparing for the upcoming year. Include an estimated timeline and if there will be public engagement, provide dates if you have them. Also, identify if you want Council support.	8/1/23	8/25/23

MEETING SUMMARY

Introduction

Joenne McGerr (ECY) welcomed the representatives. Becky Kelley (GOV) provided an introduction and emphasized this council is a way for agencies to stay coordinated and organized. Improving clean energy siting and permitting while protecting the environment, Tribal rights and interests, and communities is a priority issue for the Governor. This is a complex and challenging topic and while we have a number of tools, we still have a lot to figure out related to clean energy siting and permitting.

Diane Butorac (ECY) provided background on the Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement study done in 2021 and 2022. The study included input from industry, Tribes, agencies, and stakeholders and resulted in a legislative report with 73 recommendations.

Goals of the council

HB 1216 sets the goal for the council to improve siting and permitting of clean energy projects. The bill includes a broad definition for clean energy projects, and they could be proposed anywhere in Washington. Agency representatives should bring information to the council on what they are working on and report back to their agencies on council efforts and needs. This is a forum for planning. The council will also need input from others. We will need to discus what that looks like and how we involve interested people and groups, including federal agency representatives.

The council is responsible for submitting annual legislative reports starting October 2024. The report will include updates and recommendations for policy, funding, and legislative actions. We will need to incorporate internal agency reviews and approval processes so expect to start preparing this in July 2024.

Measures of success
The council discussed how to determine if the work is being done and if it is successful or not. They identified multiple ideas for measures for success. Ideas included the time to permit a project, time needed for interconnection, improving Tribal consultation and engagement, early dialogue on issues of concern, including equity and environmental justice considerations, consistency and planning. They acknowledged the importance of strong agency coordination to be successful.

The group also discussed how important it is to build relationships and include all those affected in the processes. Providing information on impacts and benefits to local communities is important. Improving Tribal relations is critical. The need for adequate staffing at the local government, Tribal, and state and federal agency levels was identified as a key issue in the siting study and continues to be a concern. The council discussed how they can help with this. Sierra Rotakhina (EJ Council) said the EJ Council and HEAL interagency work group are developing guidance and metrics around engagement.

Work plan development
The council discussed items for a work plan in the near-term and long-term. This included items identified in HB 1216 as well as other work where agencies need support from the council. The council will discuss if workgroups or advisory committees are needed and when public meetings might be held.

The work plan will be used to develop a shared calendar for agency coordination and planning. This will help prevent working at cross purposes. The work plan will be discussed further at the next meeting. It will be important to consider the rule of this council given all the other work on clean energy.

The council also discussed the need for consolidated engagement to share information with the public, stakeholders, and Tribes. Agencies are all working on aspects of clean energy and holding their own meetings with various groups. It would be more effective to have agencies provide updates on the broader clean energy work so that people do not need to go to multiple meetings. This issue will be discussed further at the next meeting. Action item added to provide information on clean energy work and public engagement.

Updates on committees, work groups, other related work

- Joint committee on energy supply, energy conservation, and energy resilience is standing up and may begin holding meetings soon.

Next steps

- Diane will provide possible recurring meeting options and agencies will provide responses on best dates. Meetings will be hybrid if possible.
- Continue discussion at next meeting on measures of success and work plan development.