Clean Energy Environmental Justice Toolkit

June 2026 workshop summary

Background

Washington strives to be a leader in advancing environmental justice while transitioning to a clean-energy economy. In past legislative reports, the council recommended making clean energy siting more beneficial for communities and improving community and Tribal engagement. To strengthen this work statewide, we are developing Clean Energy Environmental Justice guidance.

The goal of the guidance is to support developers, communities, and Tribes by providing information about equitable engagement practices. It builds upon the work done for the Department of Commerce's Environmental Justice Toolkit for Hydrogen Project Developers.[1] It will include best practices and recommendations for designing meaningful engagement, along with guidance documents and templates to help put those practices into action. This guidance will continue to evolve as new information becomes available and as we receive additional input from communities, Tribes, and other partners.

We held a public workshop and a Tribal forum in June 2026. The presentation is available online.[2]

June 2026 workshop overview

In June 2026, we convened a virtual workshop on June 24th at 2:30 PM.

In addition to the workshop opportunity, Ecology held a Tribal forum on the 23rd and Tribal feedback is incorporated into this workshop summary.

The purpose of the workshops was to provide background information on the development and purpose of the toolkit, review a preliminary outline, and gather input from communities and Tribes The agenda included breakout sessions where participants could share their experiences engaging in clean energy development and provide feedback on what tools to include in the toolkit.

[1] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/environmental-justice-toolkit-for-hydrogen-project-developers/
[2] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/clean-energy/council

Workshops were advertised using email and newsletter updates, and direct outreach to Tribes, industry groups, and organizations. Communications were provided in Spanish and English and the workshop also included Spanish interpretation.

Workshop participants

Participants included 2 Tribal representatives and 22 interested parties representing utilities, industry, environmental and nongovernmental organizations, community members, and state and local agencies.

What we heard

This section describes overarching questions and feedback themes raised at the workshop.

- **Common interest in the toolkit and guidance**
    - Participants are interested in developing long-term relationships between developers and communities that are broader than project-specific engagement. This helps build trust and understanding.
- **Common challenges for developers and utilities**
    - Understanding environmental justice laws, regulations, and guidance
    - Providing education on emerging technologies
    - Overcoming community perceptions; some communities are going to oppose development
        - Spread of misinformation
        - Safety concerns
        - Energy rate increases
        - Loss of agricultural lands and impacts on rural communities
    - Communicating about project siting factors, especially in areas where development has been built up around existing energy infrastructure like transmission corridors or substations
- **Recommendations for developers**
    - Use dedicated staff for community engagement
    - Share information early and provide time for community members to review and formulate their questions and comments
    - Use simple vocabulary and audio/visual aids to foster a common understanding of the technologies and project details
    - Establish channels for information sharing, such as a repository for frequently asked questions that community members

    - Advertise engagement opportunities in multiple methods, including hard-copy mailings, flyers, and targeted outreach in rural areas or low-internet access areas
    - Offer materials in multiple languages and use diverse media outlets for notifications, such as Spanish-language newspapers
    - Offer in-person meetings
    - Meet with local officials and utilities to gain an understanding of local requirements and energy constraints
    - Provide clean expectations about what is needed from meeting participants ahead of time
- **Recommendations on community benefits**
    - Consider job packages and engage with local unions to understand employment needs in a community
    - Communicate long-term benefits from hosting projects
    - Guidance for communities on developing agreements, including examples
- **General feedback on toolkit content**
    - Including additional case studies
    - Including cost benefit analyses, including additional information and context on the risks of not engaging with communities and Tribes
    - Mitigation resources
    - Additional guidance on how the toolkit should be used by developers, communities, and Tribes

Next steps

Findings from the workshops will be used to develop the draft and final document. There will be an additional workshop in September 2026 to provide an opportunity for input on the draft of the toolkit.

The dates and times of future workshops will be announced on our website[3] and via email.[4] Additional feedback can be emailed to cleanenergy@ecy.wa.gov.

[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/clean-energy/council
[4] https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_370