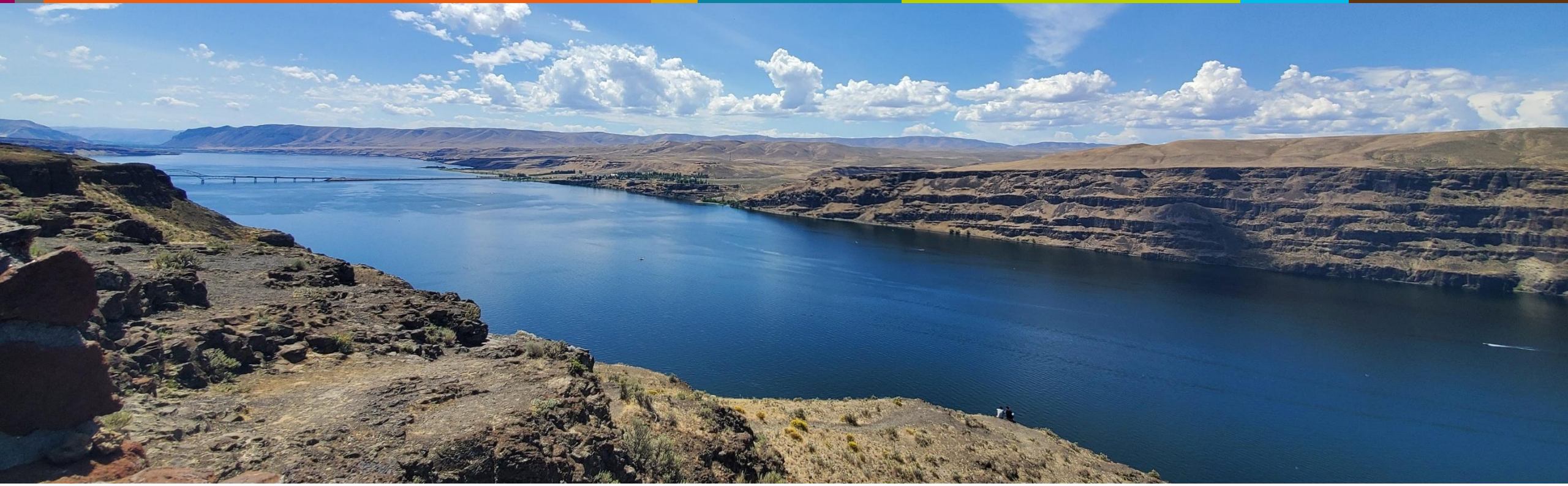


DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Washington State Department of Commerce

Clean Energy Siting Council Environmental Justice Toolkit

Public Q&A – September 2, 2026

Agenda

- Welcome
- Poll
- Background
- Toolkit purpose and intent
- Providing input
- Next steps

What is environmental justice?

- Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income
- This goal will be achieved when:
  - Everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and
  - Everyone has equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work.

Clean Energy Environmental Justice Toolkit

- The Clean Energy Siting Council has recommended improving engagement for the clean energy transition
- This toolkit provides guidance and tools to help improve engagement on clean energy projects
- The guidance builds upon Department of Commerce's Environmental Justice Toolkit for Hydrogen Project Developers

Goal: Support developers and communities by providing information about equitable engagement practices

Interagency Clean Energy Siting Coordinating Council (Council) Members

- Ecology (Co-lead)
- Commerce (Co-lead)
- Energy Facility Siting Evaluation Council (EFSEC)
- Environmental Justice Council Staff
- Governor's Office (GOV)
- Governor's Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance (ORIA)
- Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA)
- Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW)
- Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC)

Council Purpose and Objectives

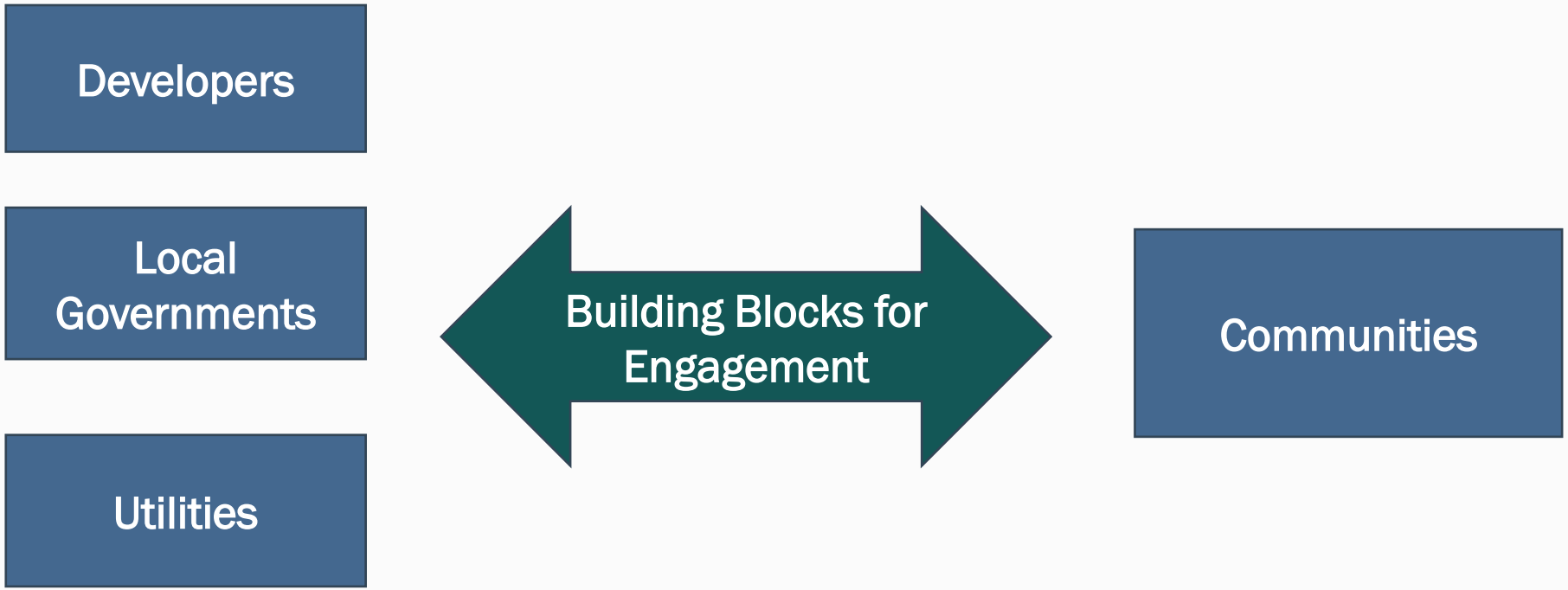
The council DOES...

- ✓ Coordinate between agencies for consistency and effectiveness
- ✓ Identify actions to improve clean energy siting and permitting
- ✓ Provide annual updates and recommendations on clean energy efforts to the Governor and legislature
- ✓ Increase awareness and participation in clean energy development with a focus on communities and Tribes

The council DOES NOT...

Make decisions on projects, siting, funding, individual agency actions, or statewide policy

Who is the toolkit for?



Toolkit purpose

Help developers

- ✓ Provide recommendations for how developers can best design and implement engagement and incorporate EJ into their process
- ✓ Guide developers to understand local needs, concerns, and perspectives

Help communities

- ✓ Support community voices
- ✓ Provides resources for people to use
- ✓ Shares case studies for awareness

This toolkit DOES NOT:

- Establish requirements for engagement practices
- Provide a guarantee that toolkit use will result in a project moving forward
- Prescribe specific engagement methods to be used with every community or Tribe

Toolkit sections

- Washington state context setting
- Developer guidance
  - Building blocks to improve community and Tribal engagement
  - Resources
- Supporting community voices
  - Building blocks
  - Resources
- Appendices
  - Glossary of terms, case studies, resources

Washington state context setting

- Clean energy in Washington
- Environmental justice in Washington
- Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and permitting:
- The case for collaboration

Developer Building Blocks

Community engagement

1. Learn about the communities in and around the area being considered for development
2. Identify and coordinate with community leaders
3. Be transparent about the project development process
4. Create meaningful opportunities for engagement aligned with key decision-making milestones

Tribal engagement

1. Learn about the Tribes in and around the area being considered for development
2. Identify and coordinate with Tribal representatives to plan Tribal engagement
3. Create opportunities for formal partnership
4. Collaborate with Tribes to identify least-conflict sites

Supporting community voices

1. Ways your voice can be heard
2. Knowing when projects are being proposed
3. Connecting with local organizations that share interests
4. Develop a community benefit plan

Community benefit planning

- Community Benefits Plans are non-binding agreements that are typically developed by community organizations, Tribes, and developers.
  - They outline the community's and Tribe's priorities for a clean energy project and the developer's commitments to those priorities.
    - Note: These are not the same as Community Benefit Agreements, which are legally binding
  - Example: A project's labor and contracting designed to benefit the local economy

Additional resources

The toolkit appendices have:

- Glossary of terms
- Case studies
- State laws
- Agencies involved in siting and permitting

Future tools

- Checklists
- Templates
- Worksheets
- What would be most helpful for you?

Next steps

Process Start
January – April 2026

Phase 1 – Establish scope and timeline
May – July 2026

Phase 2 – Seek and implement feedback
August - Sept 2026

Phase 3 – Finalize Toolkit
Oct 2026 – Jan 2027

Community & Tribal workshops

May/June
Interested parties meetings

June Informational workshops

September
Public workshops and Tribal forum

Jan/Feb 2027
Promote toolkit, share resources

30-day public comment period
August 18 – Sept. 18

Thank you!

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Clean Energy Siting Council Webpage

https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/clean-energy/council