

# Low Carbon Energy Project Siting Advisory Board

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## MEETING SUMMARY, OCTOBER 14, 2021

### Advisory Board Members participating:

- Association of Washington Business – Peter Godlewski
- Audubon Society – Adam Maxwell
- City of Spokane – Cadie Olsen
- Climate Solutions – Vlad Gutman
- Front and Centered – Mariel Thuraingham
- Klickitat County – Dave McClure
- Latino Community Fund – Giovanni Severino
- Makah Tribe – Vice-Chairman Patrick DePoe
- Port of Benton – Diahann Howard
- Puget Sound Energy – Cassie Bordelon
- Puyallup Tribe – Dawn Vyvyan
- Renewable Energy Group – Kent Hartwig
- Sierra Club – Stephanie Hillman
- Washington Environmental Council – Rebecca Ponzio
- Washington State Association of Counties – Paul Jewell
- Washington State Labor Council – Joe Kendo
- Whatcom County – Amy Keenan

### State Agency Representatives and Facilitation Team participating:

- Department of Ecology: Joenne McGerr, Brendan McFarland, Diane Butorac
- Department of Commerce: Michael Furze, Sarah Vorpahl
- Washington Governor’s Office: Becky Kelly, Caitlyn Jekel
- Ross Strategic: Tom Beierle, Tristan Márquez

### Meeting Action Items

Responsible Party	Action Item	Start Date	Date Due
Advisory Board members	Identify the top 3-5 systemic issues related to siting	Oct 14	November meeting
Advisory Board members	Complete the survey for future meeting dates	Oct 14	Oct 21
Facilitation team	Distribute an Advisory Board contact list to members	Oct 14	November meeting

### Opening

Joenne McGerr (Ecology) welcomed Advisory Board members and meeting attendees. Tom Beierle (Ross Strategic) provided an overview of the meeting agenda and objectives.

Advisory Board members introduced themselves and spoke about their interest and experience in facility siting and environmental review. Interests included:

- A predictable and straightforward process for permitting and siting clean energy projects
- Consistency in permitting
- Getting the infrastructure built that would facilitate a clean energy transition

- Building a clean industrial economy in Washington that moves away from fossil fuels and addresses environmental needs
- A consistent regulatory process that will provide opportunities to meet the goals of the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) and address climate change impacts
- A shared interest and excitement in working together to bring solutions to the table
- Acknowledging the effects policies may have on marginalized groups, particularly people of color
- Addressing equity concerns that come with energy operations
- Ensuring that siting processes uphold tribal treaties, do not harm tribal resources, and are done in full consultation by affected tribes
- Ensuring the study work is complementary to new laws

### *Project Overview*

Diane Butorac (Ecology) presented the Advisory Board with an overview of the siting study and the study's purpose, approach, goals, and timeline. The presentation can be found [here](#).

### *Advisory Board Charter and Ground Rules*

Beierle presented the proposed Advisory Board Charter and Ground Rules. In response to a question, McGerr explained that tribal treaty rights and cultural resource impacts would need to be addressed on a project-by-project basis. It was also stated that migratory species and water sources are also vital tribal resources.

The Advisory Board was asked to provide characteristics of a well-functioning siting process that would recognize tribal treaty rights and consider the most impacted communities. Themes included:

- Strong communications at all levels of the process
- Predictable, defined timelines with a defined scope of study and clear expectations of the process
- Clearly defined expectations and standards
- Adequate capacity and resources for the agencies regulating the process, including trained staff and tools
- Recognizing that internet access is an issue in rural areas
- Simple, proactive communication with project proponents with clear timelines
- Protection of natural and cultural resources
- Streamlined engagement with the right stakeholders
- Complete and thorough information from project proponents with transparency if there are changes to project and the steps to take to review those changes

### *State Energy Strategy Presentation*

Michael Furze (Commerce) presented on the Washington State Energy Strategy developed in 2020. The presentation can be found [here](#). In response to a question on priorities for achieving Washington State's Net-Zero Vision by 2050, he clarified that there many interdependencies between the activities and that he couldn't say which ones were prioritized over others.

A member asked what dimensions were being used to measure equity in the State Energy Strategy and what specific equity points are prioritized. Furze clarified that the conversation starts out with increased inclusion and access for all people. That approach and that continuum are centered on empowering communities. Equity will be a core part of the State Energy Strategy's implementation.

### *Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) Presentation*

Kathleen Drew (EFSEC) presented on the council's history and "one-stop" siting process for major energy facilities in the State of Washington. The presentation can be found [here](#).

A member asked for clarification on how the EFSEC process included community participation to address questions or concerns about new clean energy facilities. Drew explained that EFSEC provides opportunities for public comments and participation throughout the entire siting process. She further clarified that if there are community concerns, EFSEC uses the science to make a balanced decision.

A member asked how EFSEC sees its processes and focus, now that there is a great need considering climate issues. Drew said EFSEC balances several aspects of proposed projects, including environmental impacts and the need for energy, and that it follows state energy policy and laws like CETA.

A member stated that any federal projects that occur on tribal land require consultation with tribes. Drew said state agencies have similar obligations with tribes. A member asked if there was any data or assumptions being used to think about the resource mix coming from in-state versus out-of-state energy. Drew specified that EFSEC focuses on understanding impacts within Washington, recognizing that Washington is part of a larger energy system.

### *Opportunities for Further Information Sharing*

The Advisory Board was asked if there were other areas where it would be helpful to have further information to inform the study. Responses included:

- Information or case studies on projects that were successful or not and what happened
- A historical understanding of the siting process, including who was exploited, left behind, or negatively impacted
- Where gaps in knowledge exist
- Broad insights on what is not working within the current regulatory framework in consideration of emerging issues
- The state's electrical grid system and limitations

### *Closing*

The Advisory Board reviewed proposed topics for the next meeting including more information around the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and members were asked to come to the next meeting with the top 3-5 systemic issues they see related to siting. Members were also reminded to fill out the survey for future meeting dates. Butorac added that the facilitation team was trying to be mindful of everybody's availability and workloads and that a contact list would be provided to Advisory Board members if they would like to contact each other.