

Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Advisory Board

MEETING SUMMARY, DECEMBER 15, 2021

Advisory Board Members participating:

- Association of Washington Business – Peter Godlewski
- Front and Centered – Mariel Thuraingham
- Invenergy – Laura Miner
- Klickitat County – Dave McClure
- Latino Community Fund – Giovanni Severino
- Makah Tribe – Haley Kennard
- NextEra Energy, Inc, - Christopher Powers
- Port of Benton – Diahann Howard
- Port of Grays Harbor – Gary Nelson
- Puyallup Tribe – Lisa Anderson
- Renewable Energy Group – Kent Hartwig
- Sierra Club – Stephanie Hillman
- Spokane City – Breean Beggs
- Washington Environmental Council – Rebecca Ponzio
- Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council – Mark Riker
- Washington State Labor Council – Joe Kendo
- Whatcom County – Amy Keenan

State Agency Representatives and Facilitation Team participating:

- Department of Ecology: Brendan McFarland, Diane Butorac
- Department of Commerce: Sarah Vorpahl
- Washington Governor’s Office: Becky Kelley, Caitlyn Jekel
- Ross Strategic: Tom Beierle, Tristan Márquez, Heather Christopher

Meeting Action Items

Responsible Party	Action Item	Start Date	Date Due
Advisory Board members	For the next meeting, identify the information in a mapping tool that would be most valuable to support siting, environmental review, permitting, understanding of tribal treaty rights and cultural resources processes, and consideration of highly impacted communities.	Dec 15	January 5th

Opening

Tom Beierle (Ross Strategic) welcomed Advisory Board members and meeting attendees and provided an overview of the meeting agenda and objectives. Advisory Board members joining for their first meeting introduced themselves and spoke about their interest and experience in facility siting and environmental review.

State Updates

Diane Butorac (Ecology) provided the Advisory Board with overviews of the [Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Interim Legislative Report](#) and the [Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Overview of](#)

State Siting Efforts and Agencies report from Ecology and Commerce. Both reports provide information that will continue to be built upon throughout the siting study process. The interim report outlines the siting study process and provides information on potential improvements to siting, environmental review, and permitting. It presents the approach to consulting and engaging with Tribes, stakeholders, the public, and agencies. The Advisory Board will have additional opportunities to discuss the content of the interim report in detail during the development of recommendations. The second report provides background and context on current and planned siting work related to clean energy in Washington and other states.

Becky Kelley and Caitlyn Jekel (Washington Governor's Office) provided an update on Governor Inslee's climate package and budget proposals for the 2022 legislative session. The governor has the following four priorities in his climate strategy:

- Decarbonize the building sector
- Successfully implement the Climate Commitment Act
- Invest more in clean transportation
- Build the clean energy future in Washington

The strategy includes changes to the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). Separately, the governor plans to request legislation on improving consultation with Tribes related to the Climate Commitment Act.

Unpacking the Key Systemic Issues Related to Siting

Beierle introduced an activity to unpack the systemic issues related to siting that were identified in the November meeting. The board broke into smaller groups three times, for a total of nine topic discussions, to identify why the systemic issues might occur and what it would take to improve them. Groups reported their key findings to the full Advisory Board after every session. Tom Beierle, Tristan Márquez, and Heather Christopher (Ross Strategic) took notes for the three groups during each discussion. The ideas identified by the groups will be discussed in more detail by the Advisory Board in future meetings to build recommendations.

The groups identified ideas on how to improve siting, review and permitting processes for low-carbon energy projects, including:

- Responsible clean energy siting
- Streamlined process for low carbon development projects
- State-level consistency across all low-carbon projects
- Clear acceptance/rejection criteria for permits
- Better information/expertise on new clean energy technologies
- Clearer delineation of high/low risk from projects/technologies
- Adaptive management or feedback loop for application review and refinement
- A detailed list of deliverables and a clear list of acceptance/rejection criteria on each agency website
- Meaningful consultation with Tribes early in the process
- Clarifying state and local government roles in upfront planning

- Defining clean energy facilities
- Two-pronged consultation with Tribes: technical and leadership
- Leverage governor and agency Tribal liaisons for coordination and information
- Earlier and broader engagement for community awareness and conversations
- Better notifications for communities
- Acknowledging potential harms to communities
- Analyzing long-term impacts of low-carbon facilities on communities
- Clarifications on how to evaluate alternatives
- State analysis to create a pathway for understanding what analysis/mitigation can look like
- Stricter and more consistent methods for assessing and mitigating impacts
- Better communications about jurisdictions and processes
- Establish criteria for low-carbon projects to qualify for streamlined approach
- Consider changes needed to local codes for project siting and permitting
- Clear and accurate project information early from project proponents
- Restrict introduction of new information in the middle of the process
- More agency funding for staff to work on siting and permitting and to build agency capacity
- Follow the public process to provide information to communities
- Draw from experience outside of Washington

Closing

The facilitation team will format the notes from the unpacking systemic issues discussions and distribute them to the Advisory Board ahead of the January meeting. The next meeting will be on January 5th and will focus on mapping tools. Advisory Board members were asked to think about what information in mapping tools would be the most valuable to siting and how they see themselves and others using mapping tools.