



Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Study

Recommendation Development

July 2022



Low-Carbon Energy Project Siting Improvement Study

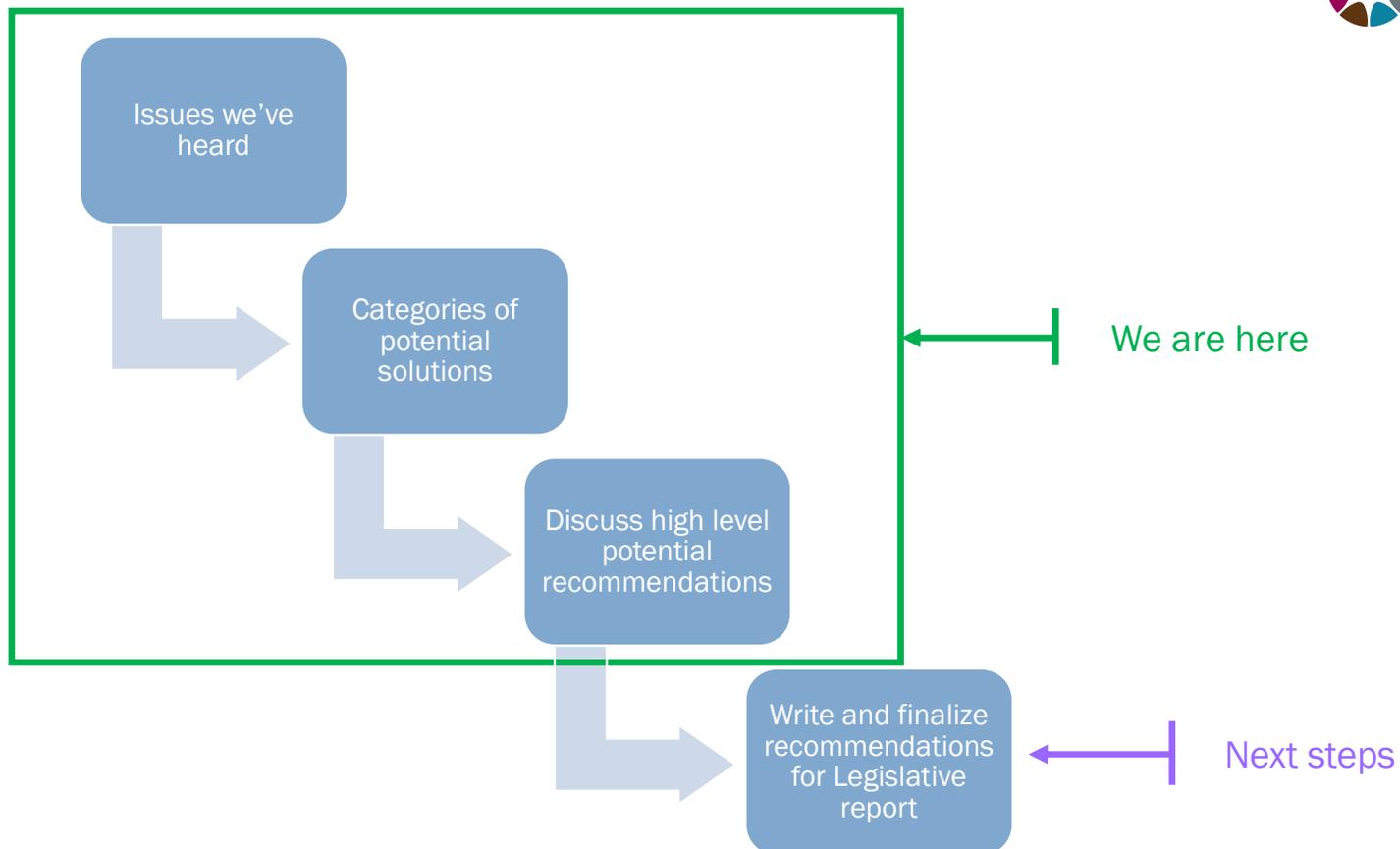


To support Washington’s clean energy transformation and meet the state’s greenhouse gas limits, new industrial clean energy projects and facilities are expected to be proposed for development. For this siting study, Ecology and Commerce have engaged and consulted with stakeholders, Tribes, and agencies to identify systemic issues related to:

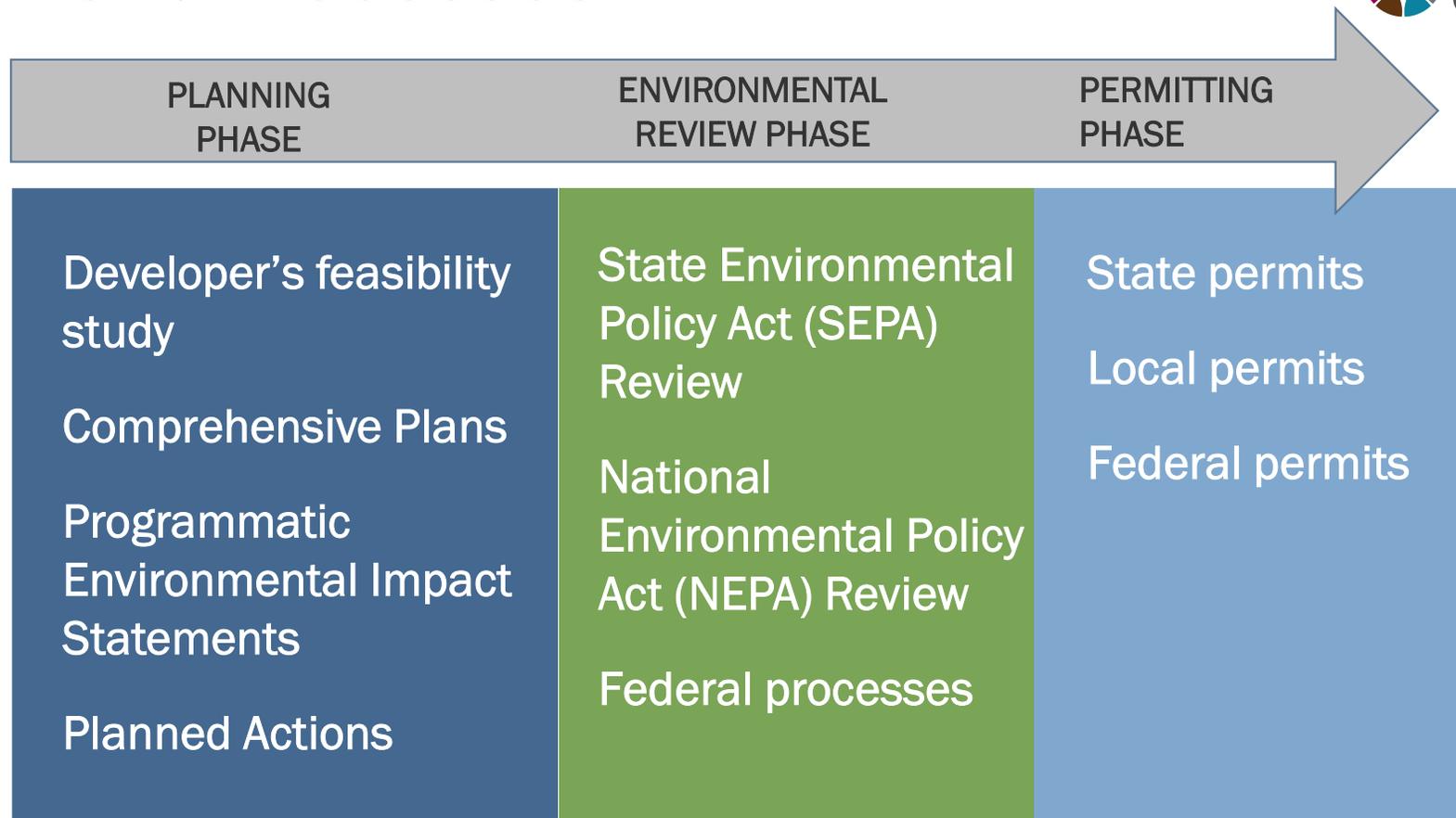
- Siting industrial clean-energy projects,
- Environmental review and permitting processes,
- Tribal treaty rights and cultural resources processes, and
- Consideration of vulnerable and highly-impacted communities.

Recommendations will be developed over the next months to improve these processes and be included in a Legislative report due Dec. 1, 2022.

Recommendation Development Process



Current Processes



Issues We've Heard

Issues we've heard related to siting, environmental review and permitting clean energy projects fall into five general categories:

- Inefficient and time consuming process
- Information gaps
- Insufficient consultation, engagement, and information sharing with Tribes
- Uncertainties over project impacts and benefits

Issues We've Heard



Inefficient and time consuming process:

- Permitting can take a long time in Washington and processes vary too much
- Developers need more consistency and certainty to move forward on projects
- Federal, state, and local planning and permitting timelines may not be aligned
- Overlapping federal, state, and local permitting processes can result in duplication of effort or inconsistent outcomes
- Staff workload capacity at the state and local level can affect project review and permitting

Issues We've Heard



Information gaps:

- Entities involved (local governments and communities, Tribes, agencies, developers) need more information earlier about proposed projects to understand potential impacts
- Lack of mapping tools with information and points of contact
- Coordinated and consistent data sources are needed

Issues We've Heard

Insufficient consultation, engagement, and information sharing with Tribes:

- Tribes said they are not meaningfully included in siting and permitting processes
- Tribes stated they need information earlier on projects for awareness and for adequate time to review
- Tribes identified insufficient staffing capacity for consultation and engagement on planning and project review

Issues We've Heard



Uncertainties over project impacts and benefits:

- Impacts are not adequately analyzed due to missing baseline information, inconsistent assessment methods, or lack of consolidated data sources
- Local communities' concerns for potential community impacts often outweigh the benefits they see from clean energy projects
- Some information may be sensitive and not shared publicly

Categories of Potential Solutions

Conduct upfront planning to make siting and permitting projects more efficient
Improve consultation, engagement, and information sharing with Tribes <i>(Based on input to date; will be further developed through ongoing discussions with Tribes)</i>
Improve community engagement
Assist local government and other entities involved to support coordinated clean energy and economic development
Improve guidance, training, and tools
Coordinate federal, state, and local planning efforts when siting low-carbon energy projects
Build state organizational structure to implement recommendations and coordinate efforts

High-level recommendations

Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Conduct upfront planning to make siting and permitting projects more efficient	Additional least-conflict mapping for specific geographic areas or energy types				
	Planned actions and programmatic reviews to analyze potential impacts and mitigation				
	Early engagement with Tribes and communities on every phase of process to identify issues and concerns				
	Emphasis on pre-application phase to provide information and guidance				

High-level recommendations

Based on input to date; will be further developed through ongoing discussions with Tribes

Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Improve consultation, engagement, and information sharing with Tribes	Improved early consultation, engagement, and information sharing for projects and planning				
	Improved analysis of impacts to Tribal treaty resources and cultural resources				
	Identification of culturally important resources				
	Funding for dedicated staff				
	Develop training for state agencies, local governments and developers on Tribal consultation and engagement				

High-level recommendations



Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Improve community engagement	Environmental justice considerations included in the processes				
	Emphasis on early engagement in projects and planning to address concerns, including prior to siting decisions				

High-level recommendations

Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Assist local government and other entities involved to support coordinated clean energy and economic development	Identification of local jobs and economic development opportunities				
	Improved guidance, training, and information to share with local communities and developers				
	Clean energy “navigators” to provide expertise and support for multiple users				

High-level recommendations



Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Improve guidance, training, and tools	Clarity of permitting jurisdictions, timing, and trade-offs				
	Mapping tools to support early issue identification and engagement for siting projects				
	Consistent information and access to best available science for analysis				
	Guidance/tools for assessing key impacts (vessel traffic, species, habitat, greenhouse gases, economic, cultural, Tribal treaty rights, etc.)				

High-level recommendations

Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Coordinate federal, state, and local planning efforts when siting low-carbon energy projects	Federal/state/local coordination mechanisms				
	Joint federal/state/local processes (e.g. joint review, landscape-level planning)				

High-level recommendations

Solution category	Potential recommendations	Improves efficiency	Reduces information gaps	Supports meaningful Tribal consultation & engagement	Improves impact and benefit analysis
Build state organizational structure to implement recommendations and coordinate efforts	Interagency coordination team to implement recommendations				
	Dashboard to provide one stop for information on clean energy projects				
	Funding to improve state agency capacity				

Timeline and Next Steps

