



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA)  
DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND  
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

January 14, 2021

**Lead agency:** Department of Ecology

**SEPA Responsible Official:** Sage Park, sage.park@ecy.wa.gov, 509-457-7120

**Description of the Proposal:**

The proposed Project will consist of a closed-loop pumped-storage hydropower facility with an upper and lower reservoir with over 2,400 feet of maximum gross head that will be located off-stream of the Columbia River. The Project will utilize variable-speed, pump-turbine generator units and provide balancing services and renewable energy flexible capacity to utilities in the Pacific Northwest and potentially California. The proposed Project will consist of the following new facilities:

- An upper reservoir consisting of a concrete face rockfill embankment dam approximately 175 feet high, 8,000 feet long, a surface area of about 61 acres
- A lower reservoir consisting of a concrete face rockfill embankment dam approximately 205 feet high, 6,100 feet long, a surface area of about 63 acres
- Upper reservoir ungated vertical intake structure with a hood to prevent vortex formation
- Lower reservoir horizontal intake structure, including vertical steel slide gates to allow isolation of tailrace tunnel from lower reservoir
- Water conveyance system and penstocks
- An underground water conveyance tunnel, underground powerhouse cavern, and underground transformer gallery cavern containing 18 115-kilovolt (kV) intermediate step-up transformers
- 115 and 500 kV transmission line(s)
- A substation/switchyard and other appurtenant facilities
- Aerial transmission line and interconnection to BPA's John Day Substation

- Minor appurtenant support structures (e.g., maintenance building, shop) and security fencing

Additional materials are available on the project website:

<https://ecology.wa.gov/Goldendale-Energy>

**Location of proposal:** The Project is primarily located in Klickitat County, Washington, approximately 8 miles southeast of the City of Goldendale, on John Day Dam Road. The proposed Project Boundary encompasses approximately 681.6 acres, most of which are private lands owned by NSC Smelter, LLC. All Project construction will occur either on private lands or within an existing utility right-of-way that is owned by the BPA.

**Proponent:** FFP Project 101, LLC

**EIS Required:**

The Department of Ecology has determined that the project will likely result in significant adverse environmental impacts. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared after the scoping process.

Probable project impacts and areas of proposed study for the EIS including (but not limited to):

**Air Quality**

- Effects of project construction activities on air quality, including the adequacy of proposed measures to control windblown dust.

**Geologic and Soils Resources**

- Effects of project construction and soil disposal, including disposal of contaminated soils, on soil erosion and sedimentation.

**Aquatic Resources**

- Effects of project water withdrawals (e.g., initial fill and annual make-up water) on water quantity in the Columbia River.
- Effects of project construction, operation, and maintenance on water quality and fisheries resources in the Columbia River, including erosion and sedimentation and potential dispersion of contaminated soil particles.
- Effects of construction, operation, and maintenance activities on groundwater quality, recharge, and flow.

#### Terrestrial Resources

- Effects of project construction, operation, and maintenance activities, including maintenance for roads and transmission line right-of-way, on native and/or sensitive-plant communities, wetlands, and the spread and control of noxious and invasive weeds.
- Effects of project reservoirs in attracting wildlife (mammals and waterfowl) which may lead to drowning and indirect effects of injury or mortality of foraging golden eagles, peregrine falcons, and bats from the nearby nonproject wind turbines.
- Effects of increasing concentration of solutes in reservoir water over time potentially leading to toxicity for terrestrial and avian wildlife using the reservoirs.
- Effects of project transmission lines on raptors and other birds, including electrocution and collision hazards.
- Effect of permanent and temporary wildlife habitat loss due to construction of project features, including potential loss of habitat that supports foraging and/or nesting raptors and other birds.
- Effect of noise, lighting, vehicular traffic, and human presence during project construction, operation, and maintenance activities on wildlife, including Washington and Oregon special-status wildlife species, especially during sensitive periods (e.g., migrating or breeding).

#### Threatened and Endangered Species

- Effects of project construction and operation on threatened and endangered species.

#### Transportation

- Effects of project related traffic (construction and operation) on existing transportation systems.

#### Recreation

- Effects of proposed project construction, operation, and maintenance on recreational use in the project-affected area.

#### Land Use

- Effects of project construction, operation, and maintenance on wind energy and agricultural land uses and operation of and access to John Day Dam.

#### Aesthetics

- Effects of project construction, operation (including the presence of project facilities), and maintenance activities on visual resources.
- Effects of project construction and operation on noise levels in the project vicinity.
- Effects of project lighting on visual quality at night, including night sky viewing.

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Cultural Resources

- Effects of project construction and operation activities on historic and archaeological resources, traditional cultural properties, and access to exercise traditional practices and treaty rights.

Public services and Utilities

- Effects of project construction and operation on fire, police, recreation areas, and other governmental services or utilities.

Ecology will determine the full scope of the EIS at the end of the scoping period after comments are reviewed. Elements of the environment are listed in the SEPA rules (WAC 197-11-444). Not all elements of the environment outlined in WAC 197-11-444 will be included in the study.

**Scoping:** Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required.

**Comments can be submitted via:**

- **By mail:** Sage Park, Department of Ecology, 1250 West Alder Street, Union Gap, WA 98903-0009
- **Online:** <http://admin.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=eVi6D>
- **During online public meetings as verbal comments:** You can register in advance by clicking on the links in the table below.

Meeting date	Link to join the meeting online	Join by phone	Access code
Jan. 27, 2021 at 6:00 PM	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/GoldendaleEnergyJan27">https://tinyurl.com/GoldendaleEnergyJan27</a>	415-655-0001	177 243 8033
Feb. 3, 2021 at 10:00 AM	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/GoldendaleEnergyFeb3">https://tinyurl.com/GoldendaleEnergyFeb3</a>	415-655-0001	141 470 2345

**Comments will be accepted through February 12, 2021.**

Responsible Official Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date January 14, 2021

Sage Park, Regional Director  
Central Regional Office  
Department of Ecology