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EFSEC Begins Its Third Wind Power Project Review

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) received its third application to site a wind power project in Kittitas County. The Desert Claim Wind Power LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of enXco, Inc. submitted an Application for Site Certification for the Desert Claim Wind Power Project, a 180 megawatt wind power project to be located approximately 8 miles northwest of Ellensburg.

In 2005, EFSEC recommended and Governor Gregoire approved the Wild Horse Wind Power Project in eastern Kittitas County. That project, now owned by Puget Sound Energy, is nearing completion. In early 2007 EFSEC will complete its review and make a recommendation to the Governor for the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project located between Cle Elum and Ellensburg. Combined the three projects could total approximately 600 megawatts of electricity.

In 2003 enXco filed an application with Kittitas County to site the Desert Claim Wind Power Project. Kittitas County denied the application in 2005. As allowed by state law, enXco has now requested site certification of the Desert Claim Wind Power Project through EFSEC. The application filed with EFSEC on November 6, 2006 differs from the 2003 application in that the project area has been consolidated into one contiguous area and reduced from 5,237 to 4,783 acres. The numbers of turbines have also been reduced from 120 to 90. However, the output of each turbine has increased from 1.5 megawatts to 2.0 megawatts.

EFSEC has begun its detailed review the Desert Claim application. A public information meeting will be held on December 13, 2006 at the Kittitas County Events Center starting at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will inform residents about the project, describe the EFSEC review process, and hear initial public comments about the project. EFSEC expects to complete its review late next year.

Under state law, EFSEC is responsible for reviewing applications to site, construct, and operate a variety of energy facilities in Washington State. In addition to the development of an environmental impact statement, EFSEC's review includes public comment opportunities and meetings, and formal adjudicative hearings. At the end of its review, EFSEC submits a recommendation to the Governor. The Governor makes the final decision to approve or deny a project.

EFSEC is a state board with a chair appointed by the Governor, and representatives from five state agencies. When an application is submitted to EFSEC for review, representatives from the local government(s) and port district in which the project is proposed are appointed to serve on the Council.

Information about EFSEC and projects under review is posted at www.efsec.wa.gov. Copies of the Desert Claim Wind Power Project application are available for review at the EFSEC office in Olympia and at local libraries in Ellensburg, as well as on EFSEC's Web site.