

Responses to Comments in Letter 65 from William Vandermay, Bellingham Resident

Note: The responses listed below are numbered to correspond to the numbers shown in the right-hand margin of the preceding comment letter.

1. Greenhouse gas emissions are not regulated under Washington State or federal law.

The combustion of natural gas results in much lower emissions of CO₂ than the combustion of other fossil fuels, such as coal or oil. In addition, the combined cycle technology used by the proposed project would be the most efficient means available for converting the energy in fossil fuels into electrical power. The gradual replacement of coal-fired and oil-fired plants with more efficient natural gas-fired turbine generating stations is one of the national strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To the extent that the proposed facility may displace other facilities that emit greater amounts of CO₂ per megawatt of power, it may reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.

The applicant is proposing to voluntarily invest \$100,000 per year toward greenhouse gas offset projects over 10 years for a total contribution of \$1 million, not a one-time investment of \$100,000 as indicated by the commentor. In the absence of any federal, state, or local regulations, the applicant would work with appropriate groups to select projects to which the funding would be directed.

2. SE2 has indicated that they would mitigate any impairment to existing private wells in Washington that are within a one-mile radius of the City well fields (Adjudicative Hearing Transcript, testimony by Ms. McGaffey, pages 906 to 910). In addition, the Final EIS recommends additional measures to mitigate other well impairments that demonstrably result from the additional pumping. Specifically, the Final EIS recommends that the same mitigation measures should be applied to any impaired wells within Washington or Canada. See General Response D for further discussion.
3. No perceptible change to streamflow would be expected to result from construction or operation of this project. See General Response G for a discussion of potential impacts to the streams.
4. Please see General Response J for a discussion of flooding impacts.
5. The 115 kV power lines that run through Whatcom County are no longer part of the project. Only the 230 kV line to Canada is included in the project. Please see General Response B for Canadian power line impacts.
6. Thank you for your comments.