

WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY LLC  
JEFF WALKER  
PREFILED TESTIMONY  
EXHIBIT NO. 4.00

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BEFORE THE STATE OF WASHINGTON  
ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL

In the Matter of Application No. 2009-01: WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY LLC; WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY PROJECT	EXHIBIT NO. 4.00
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**APPLICANT'S PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**WITNESS #4: JEFF WALKER**

Q Please state your name and business address.

A My name is Jeff Walker, and my business address is 1501 4th Avenue, Suite 1400, Seattle, Washington 98101-1616.

Q What is your present occupation and profession, and what are your duties and responsibilities?

A I am employed by URS Corporation, an international environmental and engineering consulting firm providing services to organizations such as Whistling Ridge Energy LLC. URS Corporation assists organizations in analyzing environmental impacts and

1 land use compatibility of projects such as the Whistling Ridge Energy Project. I am a  
2 Botanist and Wetland Biologist with over fourteen years of experience, including  
3 surveying and identification of special status plant and noxious weed species,  
4 monitoring of rare plant populations, critical area assessment and permitting, and  
5 conducting wetland delineations and evaluations. My duties on this Project were to  
6 review peer surveys for completeness, perform a survey for rare plants on areas that  
7 were not previously surveyed due to changes in the Project access and turbine string  
8 realignment, to update earlier survey work done on wetlands, and to update the  
9 location of surface water or streams shown on figures included in the application. I  
10 assisted in the preparation of the Application for Site Certification for this Project.

11  
12 Q Please identify what has been marked for identification as Exhibit No. 4.01.

13  
14 A Exhibit No. 4.01 is a résumé of my education background and employment  
15 experience.

16  
17 Q Are you sponsoring any portions of the Application for Site Certification for the  
18 Whistling Ridge Energy Project?

19  
20 A Yes. I am sponsoring the following sections:

21 Section 3.3.1 Surface Water Resources (Movement/Quality/Quantity)

22 Section 3.4.1 Habitat and Vegetation

23 Section 3.5 Wetlands and Other Jurisdictional Waters

24  
25 Q Are you sponsoring any appendices or other documents that are part of the Application  
26 for Site Certification?

1 A Yes. I am sponsoring the following appendix:  
2 Appendix B-1 Vegetation Technical Report  
3 Appendix B-2 Rare Plant Survey Report  
4 Appendix C Wetlands Report  
5  
6 Q Are you familiar with the identified sections and appendix of the Application for Site  
7 Certification?  
8  
9 A Yes.  
10  
11 Q Did you prepare or assist in the preparation of these sections of the Application for  
12 Site Certification, or, if not, did you direct and/or supervise their preparation?  
13  
14 A Yes.  
15  
16 Q Have you reviewed these appendices to the Application for Site Certification?  
17  
18 A Yes.  
19  
20 Q Is the information in these sections and appendices within your area of authority  
21 and/or expertise?  
22  
23 A Yes, Sections 3.4.1 and 3.5 and the appendices are within my area of expertise.  
24 Portions of Section 3.3.1 are also in my expertise.  
25 ////  
26 ////

1 Q Are the contents of these sections and appendices of the Application for Site  
2 Certification either based upon your own knowledge, or upon evidence, such as  
3 studies and reports that reasonably prudent persons in your field are accustomed to  
4 rely on in the conduct of their affairs?

5  
6 A Yes.

7  
8 Q To the best of your knowledge, are the contents of these sections and appendices of  
9 the Application for Site Certification true?

10  
11 A Yes.

12  
13 Q Do you incorporate the facts and contents of these sections and appendices as part of  
14 your testimony?

15  
16 A Yes.

17  
18 Q Are you able to answer questions under cross examination regarding these sections  
19 and appendices?

20  
21 A Yes, but not including the stormwater and chemical spills portions of Section 3.3.1.

22  
23 Q Do you sponsor the admission into evidence of these sections and appendices of the  
24 Application for Site Certification?

25  
26 A Yes.

1 Q Are there any modifications or clarifications to be made to those portions of the  
2 Application for Site Certification that you are sponsoring?

3  
4 A Yes. On page 3.5-1 of the Application, in Section 3.5.1.1, in the second paragraph  
5 under “Project Site”, the sentence that reads “*The planned improvements to existing*  
6 *roads that would occur inside the Scenic Area would cross one intermittent stream*  
7 *(shown on Figure 3.3-1)*” should have been revised to read “The planned  
8 improvements to West Pit Road outside the Scenic Area would cross one intermittent  
9 stream” in the October 2009 amendment package. Site access was changed and the  
10 improvements to roads within the Scenic Area are not required. This correction  
11 should also be made to page 3.3-1, in the second paragraph of Section 3.3.1.1.

12  
13 Q Would you please summarize and briefly describe the work performed to identify  
14 special-status and rare plants in the Project area?

15  
16 A In 2003, CH2MHill did a record search of the Washington National Heritage  
17 Program’s (WNHP) data base of known rare plant locations in the vicinity of the  
18 Project site, and WNHP’s *Rare Plant List for Skamania County*. CH2MHill surveyed  
19 the Project site in 2003. I reviewed CH2MHill’s survey methods, scope of survey  
20 (area surveyed), and results in its Rare Plant Survey Report completed in October  
21 2003. The methods utilized in CH2MHill’s survey were appropriate and the results  
22 are reliable. After comparing the area surveyed in 2003 with the most recent Project  
23 design, in 2009 I surveyed the areas of the Project site that had changed due to a  
24 change in the site access and changes in turbine string alignment. Surveys were  
25 conducted using Bureau of Land Management plant survey protocols. I used a 300-  
26 foot survey corridor centered on proposed turbine strings and associated access roads,

1 and a 100-foot corridor centered on existing roadways that were identified as needing  
2 improvement. Additional survey locations included areas proposed for operations and  
3 maintenance facility, substation, and staging areas. As part of the 2009 field effort, I  
4 resurveyed some areas that were covered in 2003. I also consulted the U.S. Fish and  
5 Wildlife Service listing of Federal-listed or proposed as a rare, threatened, or  
6 endangered species in Skamania County, and also confirmed that no additional plants  
7 had been added to the WNHP's database for the Project area since 2003.  
8

9 Q. Are there any federal-listed plants species known to occur on the Project site or in the  
10 vicinity of the Project site?

11  
12 A. No.

13  
14 Q Please identify the rare plants in the Project area.

15  
16 A There are four rare plants known to occur within two miles of the Project site,  
17 including branching montia (*Montia diffusa*), Suksdorf's desert parsley (*Lomatium*  
18 *suksdorfii*), Siskiyou false hellebore (*Veratrum insolitum*), and golden chinquapin  
19 (*Chrysolepis chrysophylla*). Two additional rare plant species are reported as  
20 historically occurring in the vicinity of the Project site, including bolandra (*Bolandra*  
21 *oregana*) and white-top aster (*Aster curtus*). Three occurrences of the Oregon white  
22 oak/Idaho fescue (*Quercus garryana/Festuca idahoensis*) vegetation community, a  
23 Known High-Quality or Rare Plant Community and Wetland Ecosystem of  
24 Washington, are documented within two miles of the Project site. These are located  
25 along the Columbia and White Salmon Rivers. No additional rare plants sites have  
26 //

1           been recorded in the vicinity of the Project site since the rare plant surveys were  
2           conducted in 2003.

3  
4   Q       What time of year did you perform the field work in 2009?

5  
6   A       I performed field work to survey for the presence of rare plants and wetlands in May  
7           and July of 2009 as these are the times of year when the rare plants with potential to  
8           occur in the Project area would be identifiable.

9  
10   Q       Did any of the field surveys performed on the Project site identify the presence of rare  
11           plants?

12  
13   A       No.

14  
15   Q       Will the Project have impacts on special status or rare plants?

16  
17   A       No, because no rare plants were identified in the portion of Project site surveyed to  
18           date, no Project-related impacts are anticipated to any federal- or Washington State-  
19           listed plant species during construction or operation of the proposed Project.

20  
21   Q       What work has been performed to identify the presence of wetlands in the Project  
22           area?

23  
24   A       A wetland investigation was performed at the Project site and along roads proposed to  
25           be upgraded for the Project on October 26, 2006 and January 9, 2007 (Appendix C to  
26           the Application). Since the time of those surveys, a new site access route has been

1 identified between SR 14 and the Project site to be used for equipment delivery and  
2 construction and operation labor. I performed additional wetland field work in July  
3 2009 along the roadways now proposed for construction access and confirmed that no  
4 additional wetland areas are present that would be affected by construction or  
5 operation of the Project.

6  
7 Q Did either of these investigations identify the presence of wetlands in the Project site  
8 area?

9  
10 A No wetlands or wetland indicators were identified within the study area (the turbine  
11 corridors and originally proposed access roadways). One wetland is identified to  
12 occur outside the study area perimeter west of turbines C1-C4 (Figure 3.5-1, Project  
13 Site Wetlands in the ASC).<sup>1</sup> This wetland is labeled as “Cedar Swamp” on the USGS  
14 map and is listed as palustrine unconsolidated bottom, semipermanently flooded,  
15 impounded (PUBFh) on the National Wetland Inventory. The Cedar Swamp wetland  
16 buffer does not extend into the study area.

17  
18 Q Are there wetlands along the access roads?

19  
20 A A review of the National Wetland Inventory indicates that wetlands may occur along  
21 SR 14 but not along Skamania County or private roads proposed for the Project’s  
22 construction access and turbine delivery routes. I confirmed that roads that need to be  
23 modified for the Project do not cross wetlands during field surveys in July 2009.

24  
25 <sup>1</sup> This wetland on the Project site results from a constructed impoundment according to National  
26 Wetland Inventory maps and so is not regulated locally as a critical area according to SCC Title  
21A.04.020(A)(1)(b).

1 Q Would wetlands be impacted on the Project site?

2

3 A No wetlands or wetland buffers are located within the Project construction or  
4 operation area. Therefore, no wetlands or buffers are expected to be impacted by  
5 construction or operation of the Project.

6

7 Q Would you please summarize the information on surface water contained in  
8 Section 3.3 of the Application?

9

10 A Within the Project site area, there are five intermittent drainage ways that provide  
11 short duration runoff during storm events or spring snowmelt and meet the Skamania  
12 County Critical Areas criteria for Class V Streams.

13

14 Q Does the access road cross streams or drainages?

15

16 A The proposed access road, West Pit Road, crosses one unnamed drainage in the  
17 Lapham Creek watershed. This stream had observed flow through the existing culvert  
18 under West Pit Road at the time of the July 2009 field visit. However, the surface  
19 flow and the channel disappear downstream of the culvert. There is no surface water  
20 connection to Lapham Creek.

21

22 Q Would changes need to be made to the unnamed drainage as a result of improving  
23 West Pit Road for construction access?

24

25 A The one unnamed drainage along West Pit Road currently flows under the road  
26 through a culvert. The culvert would be maintained but would likely be extended

1 along with the roadway widening. This stream drainage has no defined channel  
2 downstream of the culvert. It is classified as a Class V stream under SCC 21A  
3 Appendix C. While buffers are established for Class V streams, expansion of existing  
4 uses is allowed within these buffers. The road improvements within the stream and  
5 buffer areas do not exceed the allowed expansion threshold.

6  
7 Q Will impacts occur to surface water or drainage on the site?

8  
9 A The impacts to surface water relating to site drainage during and following  
10 construction are expected to be minimal. The highest risk of construction-related  
11 impacts to surface water quality is expected to be associated with the construction and  
12 improvement of new and existing roadways. These activities are expected to disturb  
13 the largest areas, exposing soils in potentially steep areas. The highest priority for  
14 these activities would be to control erosion and sedimentation.

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