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Printed copy of Tom Rousseau speaker notes for the Whistling Ridge Energy Project, Application 2009-01, public hearing at Underwood Community Center, Underwood, WA, 5 Jan 2011.

My name is Tom Rousseau. I live in the mid Hood River Valley. I am here to comment on the proposed Whistling Ridge Energy Project, Application document 2009-01.

Like almost everyone in this room, I strongly advocate establishing a diverse base of environmentally friendly and naturally renewable energy sources, including wind powered generators. However, I am opposed to this project because it is the right project in the wrong place. This project should be placed where the negative impact to scenery and wildlife are minimal. There are good places and bad places to locate wind generator farms. Good places, for example, include eastern Washington and Oregon, in less scenic and sparsely visited areas where scenic and habitat impacts are minimal. Bad places are those that would detract from the scenic quality of unique and special places, or have unknown tolls on habitat, such as Yosemite or the Columbia Gorge.

There are three compelling reasons this project is wrong:

**Scenic impact:** This has been brought up many times, so I won't belabor the clear assault this project would have on the scenic qualities of the Columbia Gorge. This project certainly violates the intent of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Act, which is to preserve the scenic views from anywhere in the Gorge. Unpleasant views would be further exacerbated at night with the bright red lights flashing in unison, visible from many places in the Gorge, the White Salmon drainage, and the Hood River Valley. If you doubt the unsightliness of this image, I invite you to the eastward view from the east slopes of the Goat Rocks Wilderness, Mt Adams or Mt Hood. The application document inadequately addresses the project's visual impact, understating the views, and totally ignores the nighttime lighting. Good reason to deny the project.

**Human and wildlife impact:** In the words of the application document (p. I-7): "Ongoing forest management [by the project sponsor SDS] on lands located within the project site has reduced the suitable habitat for these [therein identified as the northern spotted owl, western gray squirrel, northern goshawk] species through fragmentation of mature forests". This statement clearly admits the poor forest management of the past, and is not justification for continuing it in the future. This project should be denied in order to allow the natural habitat to re-establish itself.

**Energy management:** It has been reported in the media and by the BPA that a good plan for managing the energy provided by wind power has yet to be established. The intermittent nature of wind power makes energy storage essential. Yet presently there is no plan to manage wind generated energy storage and distribution... only notions. The application document does not address this serious issue, yet another reason to deny this project.

In the grand scheme, the relatively miniscule energy that would be available from this project is not worth the scenic and ecological damage that would ensue. The energy from these fifty wind generators would be insignificant compared to the energy from the hundreds, becoming thousands, of generators in Eastern Washington and Oregon. This is not a good trade-off between energy production on the one hand and denigration of the NSA's scenic qualities on the other. Please recall that just last year the Columbia Gorge was ranked in the top ten scenic areas in the world by the National Geographic Society, ahead of such treasurers as Yosemite, Yellowstone and Africa's Serengeti. Surely you would not build wind generator farms in these areas, and certainly you should not build them in the Gorge, either.

The fact that this project proposal has already been scaled back from more than 90 generators in its earlier vision for environmental considerations is further reason to deny it.

And finally, we are all currently experiencing economic hardship. However, we must resist the temptation of deficient projects for short term economic gains at the expense of losses that would be felt for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

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