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WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY
PEGGY BRYAN
PREFILED TESTIMONY
EXHIBIT NO. 41.00

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. 41.00
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**INTERVENOR SKAMANIA COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY
WITNESS #41: PEGGY BRYAN MILLER**

Q Please state your name and business address.

A My name is Peggy Bryan Miller and my business address is 167 NW 2nd, PO Box 436, Stevenson, WA 98648.

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

1 A I am the former Executive Director for the Skamania County Economic
2 Development Council (“SCEDC”). I remain under contract with the SCEDC in
3 regard to this matter. The SCEDC is a private, non-profit corporation
4 organized under section 501)(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The SCEDC
5 was created to define, support and promote policies and activities that
6 contribute to the economic stability and growth of the businesses and citizens
7 of Skamania County. It coordinates the use of public and private resources to
8 achieve a diversified, balanced and healthy economy. SCEDC provides these
9 services through contracts with Skamania County, the cities of Stevenson and
10 North Bonneville, The Port of Skamania County, the Skamania County PUD
11 and the Washington Department of Commerce (f/k/a Community Trade and
12 Economic Development). In spring of 2006, CTED transferred administration
13 of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Economic Development Program
14 (the Washington Investment Fund) to the SCEDC.

15 As its contracted representative, I serve under the general direction of the
16 Economic Development Council Board of Directors. I responsible for designing
17 and carrying out a comprehensive business development program for the
18 retention and expansion of local businesses, and the attraction of new
19 business to Skamania County, including the design and implementation of
20 appropriate marketing strategies for Skamania County and the EDC itself. My
21 responsibilities also include maintaining contact with businesses in the
22 community for problem resolution and/or expansion assistance; contact with
23 out-of-town businesses to promote Skamania County locations and
24 appropriate follow-up with each prospect. I oversee the administration of the
25 Washington Investment Fund and the EDC micro-loan program, provide
26 business counseling and business planning assistance to new and existing
business in Skamania County, coordinates Community Strategic Planning
efforts, participate in community, state and regional organizations relevant to

1 the EDC mission, and represent the EDC interests in public and private
2 meetings. I am also responsible for maintaining appropriate contact with local,
3 state and federal elected officials, agencies and staff to ensure proper
4 information exchange regarding issues that affect economic development, and
5 for monitoring federal, state and local legislative measures related to economic
6 and business development, promoting public policies which will encourage
7 and give orderly direction to economic development, and representing the
8 interest of local businesses and the Economic Development Council in
9 proposed legislation impacting business, economic development and job
10 creation.

11 Q Please briefly describe your experience, including involving your experience
12 with economic development in Skamania County?

13
14 A I have worked for the SCEDC for nearly 24 years, beginning in 1987. When I
15 began working at the SCEDC, timber jobs were the primary source of family
16 wage jobs and the primary private sector economic driver in Skamania
17 County. The decline in the timber industry began in the early 1980's. In
18 reaction to losing the principal source of private jobs, Skamania County has
19 struggled to diversify its economy across the industrial, manufacturing,
20 tourism, agriculture and hi-tech sectors. The county is still receiving federal
21 timer dollars to supplant the collapse of the timber industry. Receipt of those
22 funds is declining and will expire completely in the next three to four years.

23
24 As the Executive Director, I have facilitated the procurement and
25 administration of private and public funds, grants and loans to promote
26 investment, including investment in the infrastructure necessary to support
business and economic expansion, in Skamania County; have counseled

1 existing and prospective businesses seeking to locate or expand business
2 opportunities; and to promote growth of business and jobs in Skamania
3 County as an ideal place to live and work.

4
5 Q Can you describe the consequences to Skamania County as a result of the
6 lack of business investment and economic development in Skamania County?

7
8 A Yes. The decline of the timber industry combined with the anemic rate of
9 business investment and economic development has resulted in a stagnant
10 economy and sustained lack of county jobs that pay a wage that not only
11 sustains a family but raises its standard of living. As a result, Skamania
12 County continues to experience considerable human resource and revenue
13 leakage from local workers travelling west out of the county to find work in the
14 Vancouver/Portland metro area. Although these workers bring back to the
15 county some of the wages earned elsewhere, they shop in the larger urban
16 areas, and the tax revenues generated from those retail activities are captured
17 in the Vancouver/Portland metro area rather than in Skamania County.

18
19 However, Skamania County still has to provide a suitable level of service to its
20 residents. Those services are funded by tax revenues, which are leaking out.
21 Not only is there tax revenue leakage, but there is a human resource leakage
22 as well. Residents who must commute out of county to find family wage jobs
23 are not in the community on a full-time daily basis , which leaves them with
24 less time to volunteer in the schools, serve as volunteer firemen or coach little
25 league teams.

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In this fashion, lack of family wage jobs costs Skamania County its sense of community and prevents the hearty and diversified economy the SCEDC strives to support.

Q

Would you please describe the effect that the Whistling Ridge Energy Project would have on the economic development efforts in Skamania County?

A

Whistling Ridge is the first wind energy facility to be proposed for development in Skamania County. It is a project that would create both temporary and permanent family-wage jobs and contribute to the economic stability of this county in a variety of ways. Local construction jobs will provide an immediate, albeit temporary infusion into the local economy. Creation of permanent facility operations and maintenance jobs helps retain our most valuable resource – our community members. The project itself does not demand the expansion of costly, often tax-payer financed urban infrastructure. It will not be located on the small amount of remaining residential, business and commercial land available for development. Unlike other types of development, wind energy generation facilities do not place a heavy demand on governmental services. At the same time, the nature of the project itself – generation of electricity - contributes to the utility infrastructure that forms the backbone of any healthy, diversified economy.

The Whistling Ridge Energy Project is an example of private investment in the community that maximizes the productive use of a naturally recurring resource

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(wind) without depletion, creates both temporary and permanent wages, facilitates retention of or attracts new works to the county, provides a hedge against continued tax and human resource leakage, and places little strain on urban infrastructure and publicly-funded services.