Q Please state your name and business address.

A My name is James Pytel. My business address is 400 East Scenic Drive
The Dalles, OR 97058-3434.

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

A I am an instructor at the Columbia Gorge Community College in its Renewable Energy Technology Program. I am responsible for providing instruction in the
subject matter of Electronics Engineering to students in the CGCC RET program.
I also work with the CGCC and its students in representing the program, the
college and its students in advancing the interests of renewable energy
technology.

Q Please describe the purpose of your testimony.

A I am providing this testimony to respond to the pre-filed direct testimony of
Robert J. Michaels at page 28, lines 2-22; page 29, lines 1-12, and page 30, lines 11-14 regarding the economic effects of the Whistling Ridge Energy Project on
the Pacific Northwest.

Q Are you able to answer questions under cross examination regarding your
testimony?

A Yes.

Q Do you agree that the economic benefits of the project to the Pacific Northwest
are minimal and should only be measured against the delivered value of the
power?

A No. I strongly believe that the economic benefits of the project to the Pacific Northwest
are significant and broadly based across a variety of sectors including higher education,
and should not be measured by a metric that simply compares them against the delivered
value of the power generated from the project. There has been considerable financial,
leadership and skills investment made in this region to develop a regional trained
workforce to serve the wind energy industry and put people to work. CECC’s role as a
regional institution of higher education has created growth opportunities for the school to
provide new worker training and represents an element of economic activity that would simply not exist but for development of the wind industry in the Pacific Northwest.

Q Has CGCC developed any new vocational/technical certificate programs or degree programs in response to the development of the wind industry in the Pacific Northwest?

A Yes.

Q Please describe the history of the program’s development.


Development of the program has included investment of $837,000 in college resources, $474,000 in state funding, $1.4 million in monetary, scholarship, and equipment donations from wind industry partners, and $2.25 million in investments from the federal government. Part of the $474,000 from the state included funding to build an interim lab building to house industry scale equipment and training equipment.

Q How many faculty and staff positions are associated with the Renewable Energy Technology programs at the Columbia Gorge Community College?
The college currently has three full-time and three part-time faculty teaching in the program. The Director of Career and Technical Education has primary responsibility for administering this program among all the other career and technical education programs. She is assisted by another administrator who coordinates many activities and components of the program. There are two student services advisers supporting the program, one part-time administrative assistant, and one instructional assistant.

Q: What types of degree or certification does the Renewable Energy Technology Program offer?

A: Students may earn a one-year Certificate of Technical Education and a 2-year Associate of Applied Science degree in the Renewable Energy Technology field.

Q: Please describe the curriculum and coursework for each Renewable Energy Technology certificate program offered at CGCC.

A: The one-year certificate provides a strong emphasis on electronics, mechanical and hydraulics systems, motor control, and safety. Students also take college level math and writing courses.

The two-year AAS degree continues the electronics emphasis, including semiconductor devices and circuits, digital electronics, programmable logic controllers (PLCs), power generation, and industrial controls. Students take additional general education courses and end the program.
with a broad background in renewable energy power generation.

Q How many students are admitted to each program every year?

A We have approximately 70 students admitted to the RET program every year.

Q Do you receive more qualified applicants for each program than are accepted each year? If so, are there plans to expand these programs?

A Yes. For each admission cycle, we keep a waitlist up to 10 students. Over the past year these students have received a spot in the program. At the present time, there are no plans to expand the programs, as we have been able to accommodate the overflow, wait-list students.

Q Please describe the types of students who have enrolled in the RET programs at CGCC.

A Our students include Trade Act enrollees, veterans utilizing the GI bill, students with bachelor degrees, young students fascinated by renewable energy, students switching careers, and workers who have been displaced or offered re-training dollars through state or federal programs. We typically do not enroll students right out of high school because the prerequisites for admission to the program are sufficiently stringent that some college coursework is often necessary to qualify.

Approximately 85% of our RET students are from Oregon and Washington. Many of these students are training specifically to get a desired job in the renewable energy field.
We also have several students that use this program as an entryway to four year engineering programs.

Q What are the costs of attending the programs at CGCC?

A The average cost of enrollment is $6,000 per year for the RET program, which is comprised of $79 per credit plus lab and book fees.

Q Is there financial assistance available for those students and if so, does the school provide financial assistance counseling for its students?

A Yes, there is financial assistance and we help our students through the financial aid process.

Q Does CGCC provide job placement services once students complete the program? Please describe.

A Twice a year, CGCC conducts a job fair on campus that is exclusively for its RET students. The CGCC coordinates with representatives of employers within the renewable energy industry to come to our job fair, meet our students and provide information about jobs with their companies. Additionally, we work with wind industry representatives to arrange for student internships offered within the wind industry.

Q What are the salary range expectations for a graduate from these
A wind industry needs assessment completed by CGCC staff and published in December 2009 (Burd 2009) reports that entry-level technician starting wages average $19.50 per hour and mid-level technician wages average $26.50 per hour. That same study indicates that the number of wind energy technician jobs in the Oregon-Washington has increased from 55 in 2006 to 471 in 2009, a nearly nine-fold increase in the span of three years.

Q How many students have graduated from these programs since their inception?

A 78 students have graduated with AAS degrees, and 26 have graduated with a one-year certificate.

Q Does CGCC maintain data on its students’ success in finding employment in the Renewable Energy Technology field after program completion? If so, please describe the types of jobs your graduates are obtaining, salary information and location of jobs found.

A Informal data on post-program student employment is kept by RET faculty. Students are qualified for and being offered wind turbine technician jobs. Job locations range from the Pacific Northwest where there is currently a significant amount of wind farm development, to national placement. We are excited at the prospect of wind development in Skamania County and having the opportunity to train workers who may seek and
find employment at the Project there, as heretofore none of our RET graduates
have found employment there despite its close proximity to the college and other
wind energy development along the Columbia River. Our students have received
jobs within the salary ranges described above with Vestas, Siemens, GE, Suzlon,
Clipper, Mitsubishi, enXco, NAES, Iberdrola, PGE, Energy Northwest, Granite,
Upwind, and System One.

Q Is it your testimony, then, Michaels’ assessment of the economic benefits of the
WREP should not simply exclude consideration of the secondary effects, as
reflected by economic activity associated with the educational programs at CGCC
directed at training a wind energy technician work force?

A Yes.