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WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY LLC
JAMES PYTEL
PREFILED RUBUTTAL TESTIMONY
EXHIBIT NO. 51.00R

BEFORE THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL

In the Matter of Application No.
2009-01:

EXHIBIT NO. _51.00R

WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY
LLC;

WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY
PROJECT

**KLICKITAT COUNTY PULIBC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY'S
PREFILED REBUTTAL TESTIMONY
WITNESS #4: JAMES PYTEL**

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

1 subject matter of Electronics Engineering to students in the CGCC RET program.

2 I also work with the CGCC and its students in representing the program, the

3 college and its students in advancing the interests of renewable energy

4 technology.

5
6 Q Please describe the purpose of your testimony.

7
8 A I am providing this testimony to respond to the pre-filed direct testimony of
9 Robert J. Michaels at page 28, lines 2-22; page 29, lines 1-12, and page 30, lines
10 11-14 regarding the economic effects of the Whistling Ridge Energy Project on
11 the Pacific Northwest.

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

14
15 A Yes.

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

19
20 A No. I strongly believe that the economic benefits of the project to the Pacific Northwest
21 are significant and broadly based across a variety of sectors including higher education,
22 and should not be measured by a metric that simply compares them against the delivered
23 value of the power generated from the project. There has been considerable financial,
24 leadership and skills investment made in this region to develop a regional trained
25 workforce to serve the wind energy industry and put people to work. CECC's role as a
26 regional institution of higher education has created growth opportunities for the school to

1 provide new worker training and represents an element of economic activity that would
2 simply not exist but for development of the wind industry in the Pacific Northwest.

3
4 Q Has CGCC developed any new vocational/technical certificate programs
5 or degree programs in response to the development of the wind industry in
6 the Pacific Northwest?

7
8 A Yes.

9
10 Q Please describe the history of the program's development.

11
12 A In 2006, in response to the rapidly growing development of wind farms in
13 the Mid-Columbia region of the States of Oregon and Washington, Columbia
14 Gorge Community College began development of a Renewable Energy
15 Technology program. After a successful 6-month pilot program in early
16 2007, the College began offering permanent coursework in fall, 2007.

17
18 Development of the program has included investment of \$837,000 in college
19 resources, \$474,000 in state funding, \$1.4 million in monetary,
20 scholarship, and equipment donations from wind industry partners, and
21 \$2.25 million in investments from the federal government. Part of the
22 \$474,000 from the state included funding to build an interim lab building
23 to house industry scale equipment and training equipment.

24
25 Q How many faculty and staff positions are associated with the Renewable
26 Energy Technology programs at the Columbia Gorge Community College?

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A 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

1 with a broad background in renewable energy power generation.

2
3 Q How many students are admitted to each program every year?

4
5 A We have approximately 70 students admitted to the RET program every year.

6
7 Q Do you receive more qualified applicants for each program than are
8 accepted each year? If so, are there plans to expand these programs?

9
10 A Yes. For each admission cycle, we keep a waitlist up to 10 students. Over
11 the past year these students have received a spot in the program. At the present
12 time, there are no plans to expand the programs, as we have been able to
13 accommodate the overflow, wait-list students.

14
15 Q Please describe the types of students who have enrolled in the RET programs at CGCC.

16
17 A Our students include Trade Act enrollees, veterans utilizing the GI bill, students
18 with bachelor degrees, young students fascinated by renewable energy, students
19 switching careers, and workers who have been displaced or offered re-training
20 dollars through state or federal programs. We typically do not enroll students right
21 out of high school because the prerequisites for admission to the program are
22 sufficiently stringent that some college coursework is often necessary to qualify.

23
24 Approximately 85% of our RET students are from Oregon and Washington. Many
25 of these students are training specifically to get a desired job in the renewable
26 energy field.

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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 it's 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

1 programs?

2
3 A A wind industry needs assessment completed by CGCC staff and
4 published in December 2009 (Burd 2009) reports that entry-level technician
5 starting wages average \$19.50 per hour and mid-level technician wages average
6 \$26.50 per hour. That same study indicates that the number of wind energy
7 technician jobs in the Oregon-Washington has increased from 55 in 2006 to 471
8 in 2009, a nearly nine-fold increase in the span of three years.

9
10 Q How many students have graduated from these programs since their
11 inception?

12
13 A 78 students have graduated with AAS degrees, and 26 have graduated with a one-
14 year certificate.

15
16 Q Does CGCC maintain data on its students' success in finding employment
17 in the Renewable Energy Technology field after program completion? If so,
18 please describe the types of jobs your graduates are obtaining, salary
19 information and location of jobs found.

20
21 A Informal data on post-program student employment is kept by RET
22 faculty. Students are qualified for and being offered wind turbine
23 technician jobs. Job locations range from the Pacific Northwest where
24 there is currently a significant amount of wind farm development, to
25 national placement. We are excited at the prospect of wind development in
26 Skamania County and having the opportunity to train workers who may seek and

1 find employment at the Project there, as heretofore none of our RET graduates
2 have found employment there despite its close proximity to the college and other
3 wind energy development along the Columbia River. Our students have received
4 jobs within the salary ranges described above with Vestas, Siemens, GE, Suzlon,
5 Clipper, Mitsubishi, enXco, NAES, Iberdrola, PGE, Energy Northwest, Granite,
6 Upwind, and System One.

7
8 Q Is it your testimony, then, Michaels' assessment of the economic benefits of the
9 WREP should not simply exclude consideration of the secondary effects, as
10 reflected by economic activity associated with the educational programs at CGCC
11 directed at training a wind energy technician work force?

12
13 A Yes.