WHISTLING RIDGE WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT
LAND USE CONSISTENCY HEARING
May 7, 2009

Written Comments of the Board of Directors
Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association,
a Washington Non-Profit Corporation
INTRODUCTION

My name is John Crumpacker; I live in Underwood, Washington. I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association. The Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association is a Washington non-profit corporation dedicated to the promotion and improvement of sustainable agri-tourism in Skamania County. Our mission is to create and maintain favorable business conditions for association members. All members own and operate agricultural businesses in Underwood, Washington which is located in eastern Skamania County. Members of the Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Business</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acadia Vineyards</td>
<td>75 acre vineyard &amp; orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crooked Acres Vineyard</td>
<td>20 acre vineyard</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Davis Family Farm</td>
<td>50 acre farm &amp; orchard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Energeia Vineyards</td>
<td>64 acre vineyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorge Crest Vineyards &amp; Winery</td>
<td>41 acre vineyard, winery &amp; commercial event site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gorge Estate Vineyards</td>
<td>95 acre vineyard &amp; winery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamonti Vineyards</td>
<td>32 acre vineyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearblossom Vineyards</td>
<td>18 acre vineyard &amp; orchard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctuary Herb Farm</td>
<td>18 acre herb farm and vineyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soluna Vineyards</td>
<td>34 acre vineyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwood Gardens</td>
<td>6 acre lavender farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine Spring</td>
<td>40 acre vineyard</td>
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The Agri-Tourism Association is here today to provide the Council with our comments on the Land Use Consistency issues posed by the proposed Whistling Ridge project and the potential impact on our members. Today we will again confine our comments to the seven “A Towers.” We will address two issues: (1) Why the proposed “A Towers” are inconsistent with the county land use policy; and (2) Why simply moving them prevents these violations.
THE SEVEN “A TOWERS” ARE INCONSISTENT WITH CURRENT ZONING AND EXISTING USES

In the land use portion of its application, SDS suggests that this project will diversify the use of its land and, in turn, the county’s economy. Next they state that this “natural resource-based land use would better insulate the Applicant from economic cycles that have undermined similar timber operations....” What they don’t mention is that the “A Towers” would sit on land that is specifically set aside for just the opposite purpose: to protect and insulate existing uses such as the agricultural operations of the members of the Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association. Operations which continue to diversify the county’s tourism based economy, and barring the “A Towers,” are not at risk of economic failure.

We will discuss applicant’s claims in the order they are presented in Part 4.2 of the application which addresses weather the “A Towers” would comply with the controlling conditional use requirements.

The first requirement is that the seven “A Towers”

Be either compatible with other uses in the surrounding area or is no more incompatible than are other outright permitted uses in the applicable zoning district.

The applicant, and for that matter, the county, never took the time to study the socio-economic value of agri-tourism and why the A Towers are incompatible with such outright permitted uses. Our appendix of data establishes complete incompatibility and is based on research conducted by the U.S. government, the State of Washington, and the State of Oregon. This is not a wheat field surrounded by nothing. The A Towers would loom over one of the country’s premier winemaking regions and the most valuable agri-tourism land in Skamania County.

To claim that these towers are “no more incompatible with the surrounding area than other uses permitted in the County’s zoning code,” is uninformed. To say that this “project would in no way impair the use of any of the surrounding lands” conveniently ignores the years of work and the capital invested by members of the Agri-Tourism Association, not to mention the high regulatory hurdles we have so painstakingly cleared. The fact is that nowhere in this state have 420 foot turbines been approved as permanent fixtures on a ridge with such profound compatibility concerns.
The next requirement is that the project

Not materially endanger the health, safety, and welfare of the surrounding community to an extent greater than that associated with other permitted uses in the applicable zoning district.

The seven “A Towers” are the single greatest threat to the economic welfare of the Agri-Tourism community in Underwood. Our comments yesterday address this issue and no more needs to be said today.

Next, the project may

Not hinder or discourage the development of permitted uses on neighboring properties in the applicable zoning district as a result of the location, size or height of the buildings, structures, walls, or required fences or screening vegetation to a greater extent than other permitted uses in the applicable zoning district;

The application states that the “turbines in the corridor proposed in the For/Ag-20 zones would be approximately 426 feet tall” and that “the proposed turbines would be taller than other structures permitted outright in the For/Ag-20 zone.” The application claims that their height and visibility would not hinder or discourage the development of any of the uses identified in Table 4.2-2. Just the opposite is true. Commercial agriculture, a permitted use in Table 4.2-2 is the very basis of agri-tourism, which as proven in Hood River, can drive the economy of an entire county. And as established in the data we submitted yesterday, the seven “A Towers” are incompatible with agri-tourism and have therefore caused a number of wineries to table development plans.

This council deserves better than applicant’s bare claim that “the project would in no way hinder the use or development of surrounding properties.”

MOVING THE “A TOWERS” ELIMINATES THE VIOLATION OF THE COUNTY’S ZONING POLICY

The last of the conditional use requirements for the “A Towers” leads us to the policies behind our county’s land use law. It requires that this project:
Not be in conflict with the goals and policies expressed in the current version of the County’s comprehensive plan.

The policies behind the For/Ag-20 zone more clearly explains why the “A Towers” don’t belong. The county policy for the Resource Production Zone is:

To provide land for present and future commercial farm and forest operations in areas that have been and are currently suitable for such operations, and to prevent conflicts between forestry and farm practices and nonresource production uses by not allowing inappropriate development of land within this zone classification” (SCC 21.56.010[A]).

(Emphasis added.) This is a clear statement that the conflict the “A Towers” create should not be allowed.

This same conclusion must be reached by applying the County’s own vision statement for our community which states that:

Skamania County is strongly committed to protecting our rural character and natural resource based industries while allowing for planned future development that is balanced with the protection of critical resources and ecologically sensitive areas, while preserving the community’s high quality of life.

(Emphasis added.)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As the Council may have gathered, the “A Towers” are very different than the rest of this project. And they deserve to be treated differently.

These comments, and the supporting data, will be submitted to Council and posted on the “News” page of the Skamania County Agri-Tourism Association web site which is located at www.scaassn.org Thank you.