

## **1.0 Introduction**

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared as part of the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council's (EFSEC's or the Council's) Potential Site Study for the Starbuck Power Project.<sup>1</sup>

The EA briefly describes the proposed project as currently envisioned by the proponent, gives an overview of the relevant existing environmental conditions, presents the anticipated potential impacts of the proposed project, identifies environmental issues requiring emphasis in the Application for Site Certification (ASC), and discusses possible mitigation measures that could eliminate or reduce potential environmental impacts.

The EA was developed based on preliminary information provided by Starbuck Power Company, LLC (SPC); the results of a reconnaissance-level field survey conducted by Jones & Stokes, EFSEC's independent environmental consultant, in November 2000; reviews of relevant published information; preliminary scoping comments obtained at two public meetings conducted by EFSEC on December 5 and 6, 2000; preliminary scoping comments obtained at a state and local agency meeting conducted by EFSEC on December 6, 2000; correspondence with tribal organizations; and direct discussions with state and local agency personnel and with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

This EA was prepared to (1) provide an understanding of the basic potential impacts of the proposed project, (2) identify aspects of the proposed project and potential impacts that SPC should focus on in its Application for Site Certification, and (3) identify measures that could potentially reduce impacts based on the preliminary design information provided by SPC. Where possible, impacts have been identified as either significant or not significant based on the State Environmental Policy Act definition of "significant" presented in WAC 197-11-794.

Because the EA was a part of the Potential Site Study process, it is not a rigorous study of the project and its potential impacts. That level of analysis is to be provided in the Application for Site Certification and in the ensuing draft environmental impact statement. The EA is intended for use by EFSEC in considering issues related to the proposed project, and by other agencies and governmental organizations, tribes, the public, and NGOs in understanding the proposed project and determining whether or not it may affect issues of concern to them. EFSEC will make the Potential Site Study, including the EA, available to those individuals and groups and will continue to solicit their comments regarding the proposed project throughout the preliminary assessments and during the application review process described in the introduction to the Potential Site Study.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "environmental assessment" is also used to describe a specific type of environmental document required for some projects in response to the federal environmental review process. However, this EA is part of a preliminary assessment of a potential energy project conducted by EFSEC, and it is different from a federal EA.

## Chapter II. Environmental Assessment

The remainder of this EA consists of the following:

- Summary (Section 2.0)
- Description of the Proposed Project (Section 3.0)
- Existing Conditions, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures (Section 4.0)
- References (Section 5.0)
- Acronyms and Abbreviations (Section 6.0)