



PO Box 43172  
Olympia, WA 98504-3172

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**CONTACT ALLEN FIKSDAL  
360-956-2152**

**EFSEC approves the Wild Horse Wind Power Project.**

Yesterday the state Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) unanimously recommended that Governor Christine Gregoire approve the Wild Horse Wind Power Project located 13 miles northeast of Ellensburg, Washington, in Kittitas County. The recommendation includes specific conditions that will mitigate potential environmental impacts.

The Wild Horse Wind Power Project is a wind-powered electrical generation facility consisting of a series of turbines as well as associated electric transmission lines and other supporting infrastructure. Approximately 8,600 acres of undeveloped land are associated with the Project. Up to 401 acres will be temporarily disturbed by construction and 165 acres would be permanently developed for the turbine towers, access roads, substations, underground and overhead transmission lines, and an operations and maintenance facility.

If approved by Governor Gregoire the project will be able to construct and operate between 104 and 158 wind turbines that would generate between 158 and 312 megawatts of wind power. The project will interconnect with the nearby Bonneville Power Administration and/or Puget Sound Energy transmission systems. During construction the project will contribute over \$4.7 million in income to Kittitas County and once fully operational, will become the largest single taxpayer in the county.

The Council adopted as requirements the settlement agreement between the project developer Wind Ridge Power Partners, LLC, and Kittitas County to provide mitigation of environmental impacts. The Council's recommendation contains provisions to protect wildlife, habitat, and vegetation. Strict decommissioning requirements will ensure that at the end of the project's life, the turbines and towers will be removed.

EFSEC Chair Jim Luce said, "We commend the applicant and Kittitas County for working together to settle issues regarding the project. This alternative energy project will provide clean non polluting energy at a reasonable cost." Chair Luce also noted, "In addition to helping protect the environment, this project will produce needed jobs and tax revenue for Kittitas County and Washington State."

Prior to making its recommendation on the Wild Horse Wind Power Project proposal, EFSEC prepared an Environmental Impact Statement, conducted adjudicative proceedings, and held public meetings and hearings throughout its review.

EFSEC's recommendation includes a draft Site Certification Agreement that contains conditions the Wild Horse Wind Power Project would have to meet prior to and during construction, as well as during operation of the facility.

Parties to the EFSEC adjudicative proceeding will have 12 days to file petitions for reconsideration of EFSEC's recommendation. If such petitions are filed, EFSEC will review the petitions and determine if reconsideration of its recommendation is warranted. EFSEC will forward its recommendation to the Governor after the completion of the reconsideration process.

Once Governor Gregoire officially receives EFSEC's recommendation, she has 60 days to approve or reject the Wild Horse Wind Power Project proposal, or direct EFSEC to reconsider certain aspects of the Site Certification Agreement.

EFSEC is an independent state board responsible for reviewing applications for major energy facilities in Washington State. It is comprised of a Governor appointed Chair and representatives from state agencies. For each individual project a representative from local government augments EFSEC's membership for purposes of application review and recommendation to the Governor.

Information regarding EFSEC and the Wild Horse Wind Power Project recommendation can be found at [www.efsec.wa.gov](http://www.efsec.wa.gov).