



WASHINGTON STATE
ENERGY FACILITY SITE
EVALUATION COUNCIL



Date:

To: Parties Interested in the Whistling Ridge Energy Project

We would like to hear from you about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that has been prepared by the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for the proposed Whistling Ridge Energy Project.

The Draft EIS describes the proposed project and alternatives, discusses potential environmental impacts associated with the project, and identifies mitigation measures that would lessen or eliminate those impacts. Public comments on the Draft EIS will help us refine the environmental analysis and help inform our decisions concerning the proposed project. More information on the proposed project, the Draft EIS, and how to comment is provided below.

Project Background: The Whistling Ridge Energy Project has been proposed by Whistling Ridge Energy LLC, a subsidiary of SDS Lumber Company. This approximately 75-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility would be located about seven miles north of the City of White Salmon in Skamania County, Washington. The project would be located on an approximately 1,152-acre project site that is private land currently actively used for commercial timber harvest. Up to 50 wind turbines, each ranging in size from 1.2 to 2.5 megawatts (MW) and up to 426 feet tall, would be installed for the project. The project also would include an operation and maintenance facility, an electrical substation, underground collector lines and systems, access roads, and other ancillary facilities.

Whistling Ridge Energy LLC would finance, develop, own and operate the proposed Whistling Ridge Energy Project. Whistling Ridge Energy LLC has submitted an application to EFSEC for site certification that would allow for construction and operation of the proposed project. Whistling Ridge Energy LLC also has requested interconnection of the proposed project to the regional transmission system owned and operated by BPA. EFSEC and BPA thus each need to make decisions concerning the proposed wind project and have prepared the Draft EIS to help inform these decisions.

How to Comment: Two public meetings have been scheduled to receive comments on the Draft EIS. The public meetings will be held as indicated below:

June 16, 2010 - 6:30 p.m to 9:30 p.m.
Underwood Community Center
951 Schoolhouse Road
Underwood, WA 98648

June 17, 2010 - 6:30 p.m to 9:30 p.m.
Rock Creek Center
Skamania County Fairgrounds
710 SW Rock Creek Drive
Stevenson, WA 98648

If you wish to speak at the hearing, you will be asked to sign in and speakers will be called in the order they sign in. Members of the project team will also be available to describe the proposed project, explain the environmental studies performed, and answer any other questions that you may have. If you have special accommodation needs, please contact EFSEC at (360) 956-2121.

Comments may also be made by sending letters, emails, facsimiles, or leaving comments at:

EFSEC

905 Plum Street SE
Olympia, Washington 98504-3172
efsec@commerce.wa.gov

BPA

Public Affairs Office - DKE-7
P.O. Box 14428
Portland, Oregon 97293-4428;
www.bpa.gov/comment;
FAX comments to: (503) 230-3285; or
Call our toll-free comment line at (800) 622-4519 and please
reference “Whistling Ridge Energy Project Draft EIS” with
your comments.

Please note that comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposed action and will be available for public inspection.

Comments will be accepted through July 19, 2010.

Environmental Review: Before deciding whether to approve the site certificate application for the proposed Whistling Ridge Energy Project, EFSEC must conduct an environmental review of the proposal under the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Because of its primary role in siting the proposed project, EFSEC is the SEPA lead agency for preparation of the Draft EIS. As a federal agency, BPA also has an obligation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to conduct an environmental review before it makes a decision on whether to allow the requested interconnection of the proposed project to its transmission system. BPA is the NEPA lead agency for the Draft EIS.

EFSEC and BPA have worked together to prepare the Draft EIS as a joint EIS that meets the requirements of both SEPA and NEPA. This joint SEPA/NEPA EIS has allowed the coordination of EFSEC actions with federal actions in fulfillment of EFSEC’s SEPA rules at Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 463-47-150. This joint EIS also complies with NEPA implementing regulations specifying that federal agencies shall cooperate with state and local agencies to the fullest extent possible, including by preparing joint state-federal EISs, to avoid duplication between NEPA and comparable state requirements (See 40 CFR § 1506.2).

While EFSEC and BPA are the entities that have prepared the Draft EIS, these agencies have worked collaboratively with Whistling Ridge Energy LLC to obtain necessary information about the project and its potential impacts for the EIS. Initially, EFSEC had intended to allow Whistling Ridge Energy LLC to prepare the EIS, as allowed by SEPA; however, after public concern was raised, EFSEC and BPA decided that the lead agencies would be directly responsible for preparing the EIS. Accordingly, we have used environmental information provided by Whistling Ridge Energy LLC and its consultants in the EIS as appropriate. All such information has been independently evaluated and reviewed for accuracy by the lead agencies, as well as by an independent, third party consultant retained by EFSEC.

EFSEC and BPA will review and respond to all comments received on the Draft EIS during the public comment period. All comments and our responses to those comments will be published in a Final EIS for the proposed project. Also, where appropriate, the Final EIS will be updated with any changes to the proposal or analysis in response to comments. We currently expect to publish the Final EIS in the fall of 2010. When we have completed the Final EIS, EFSEC will make a recommendation to the State of Washington Governor on the Application for Site Certification Agreement, and the Governor would be expected to make a decision on whether to approve or deny the proposed project. In addition, BPA will issue a Record of Decision outlining whether and how BPA will proceed with the request for interconnection.

For More Information: Copies of the Draft EIS are available free of charge by contacting either EFSEC or BPA at the addresses listed above. Electronic copies of the Draft EIS are available on the following websites:

BPA: http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Whistling_Ridge/

EFSEC: <http://www.efsec.wa.gov/whistling%20ridge.shtml>.

Copies are also available for viewing at the following locations:

Washington State Library
Joel M. Pritchard Library
Point Plaza East
6880 Capitol Blvd
Tumwater, WA, 98504-2460
(360) 704-5200

Stevenson Community Library
120 NW Vancouver Avenue
Stevenson, WA 98230

Energy Facility
Site Evaluation Council
905 Plum Street SE, 3rd Floor
Olympia, WA, 98504-3172
(360) 956-2121

North Bonneville Library
214 CBD Mall (inside City Hall)
North Bonneville, WA 98639
(509) 427-1132

White Salmon Valley Library
#5 Town & Country Square
P.O. Box 1578
White Salmon, WA 98672
(509) 493-1132

Bonneville Power Administration
Public Information Center
905 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-3621
(503) 230-INFO

If you have any questions about the proposal or the Draft EIS, please contact Stephen Posner (EFSEC) at (360) 956-2063, stephen.posner@commerce.wa.gov, or Andrew M. Montaña (BPA) at (503) 230-4145, ammontano@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Stephen Posner

Stephen Posner
Compliance Manager, EFSEC

/s/ Andrew M. Montaña

Andrew M. Montaña
Environmental Project Manager, BPA