

Written Testimony by- Karen Poulsen Ellensburg, WA

EFSWC Land-Use Suitability Hearing Continued to December 22, 2017
Columbia Solar Project- Tuusso Energy- EFSEC Docket No. EF-170823

To Mr. Stephen Posner;
EFSEC Manager

Dear Mr. Posner and Council Members;

My testimony is regarding the land -use suitability and Tuusso Energy's request for expedited processing of its request to site 5 solar projects in Kittitas County.

KCC 17.29 Ag 20A and 17.31 Commercial Ag both have the same Purpose and Intent. "They are areas wherein farming and ranching are the priority. The intent of this zoning classification is to **PRESERVE The FERTILE FARMLAND From ENCHROACHMENT By NON AGRICULTURAL LAND USES** and protect the rights and traditions of those engaged in agriculture."

Kittitas county code KCC 17.29 Ag 20A and 17.31 Commercial Ag say that solar facilities may be allowed if they meet the 7 conditions for a conditional use permit listed in KCC 17.61.020. I don't believe that Tuusso Energy's proposal can comply with conditions 3,4,5,6 and 7a,b,and d.

3. "The proposed use complies with relevant development standards and criteria for approval set forth in this title or other applicable provisions of Kittitas County Code." It can't KCC 17.29A or 17.31 as solar facility completely changes the use of the land from an agricultural to a non- agricultural use.

4. "The proposed use will mitigate material impacts of the development, whether environmental or otherwise." Putting a fence and shrubbery around these sites can't mitigate the fact that the land has been removed from agriculture production anymore than putting a fence and shrubbery around a subdivision or industrial site can mitigate the change of use from agriculture to non-agriculture.

5. "The proposed use will ensure compatibly with existing neighboring land uses. The neighboring land uses are agriculture and rural residences." A solar generation facility with 8foot chain link fence topped with barbed wire is not compatible with the existing neighboring uses.

6. "The proposed use is consistent with the intent and character of the zoning district in which it is located." As stated previously solar facilities are not consistent with 17.29A or 17.31 of the Kittitas County Code.

7. For conditional uses outside the Urban Growth Areas, the Proposed use:

- A. "Is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, including the policies in Chapter 8, Rural and Resource Lands." Four of the five proposed solar utility sites are in the Commercial Agriculture Zone the fifth is in the Agriculture 20 Zone. The county's GPO's for these zones aren't compatible with large-scale solar utility sites.
- B. "Preserves 'Rural Character' as defined in the Growth Management Act (RCW 36.70A.030(16)). This complete change of use to an Industrial type use doesn't preserve the rural character as defined in the GMA or the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan.
- D. "Does not compromise the long term viability of designated resource lands." As agriculture land base is converted to other uses the viability of the remaining farms and the agriculture businesses they support and are supporting those farms is put under economic stress. Farmers in Kittitas County have to compete on a global market. As our agricultural land base decreases so does our ability to compete.

Tuusso Energy says that their solar projects are agriculture because they are "growing energy" just like any other crop so meet the definition of an agriculture crop. There is no definition of an agriculture crop locally, nationally or internationally that defines the production of electricity as an agricultural crop. Tuusso Energy says that their projects are only "temporary". The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in their latest report dated April 2014 defines temporary crops as those lasting 5 years or less otherwise they are considered permanent.

In most land use planning something that is temporary has a 6 month or less timeframe otherwise they are considered permanent.

I urge the Council to reject Tuusso Energy's request for expedited processing of its application. Other solar companies are just waiting to follow their lead. Please think long and hard before you permanently change the agricultural land base and rural character of Kittitas County forever.

Sincerely;

Karen Poulsen