

Speaker # 3  
Mark Pritchard

April 11<sup>th</sup> 2018

**Attention:** Stephen Posner  
EFSEC Manager  
Energy Facilities Site Evaluation Council  
P.O. Box 47250  
Olympia, WA. 98504-47250

**Subject:** EFSEC Testimony, Desert Claim Hearing  
**Author:** Dr. Mark Pritchard  
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Dear Mr. Posner

I would like to submit the following comments relative to the proposed for Desert Claim - SCA Amendment Request to include 31 significantly taller turbines. In reviewing an amendment request, under Washington Administrative Code 463-66-040, the Council considers whether the request is consistent with:

1. The intention of the original SCA;
2. Applicable laws and rules;
3. The public health, safety, and welfare;
4. The provisions of chapter 463-72 WAC (site restoration).

#### **POSITION: SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER TURBINES LEAD TO GREATER IMPACTS**

**CONCERN 1: Welfare of the Community. Economic data collected from 2010-2016, designates Kittitas as an economically Distressed Community.** (Poverty Rate, Housing Vacancy Rate, Change in Establishments, Median Income Ratio, Change in Employment)

Facility developments can produce economic impacts that undermine the Public Welfare of Kittitas. Kittitas County's economic welfare is at risk when local industry profits and jobs are threatened.

#### **IMPACTS ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY**

With support by investments by the local Chamber of Commerce, Kittitas County has a budding, award winning tourism sector that is poised to increase (e.g., "Hometown Holidays", Barn Quilt Trail Map").

#### **(a) Diminished visitor appeal significant reduces visitation rates and tourism \$revenues.**

Wind turbines diminish the attraction of the destination product and the aesthetic quality of a destination for visitors. For example, a recently published 2015 study in the journal of Energy Policy of 2200 German Municipalities noted that taller turbines created the strongest negative effect on tourism. Research from Scotland reported in the BBC News and notes even greater negative impacts, as more than half of tourists would rather not visit scenic areas dominated by man-made structures. "55% of respondents less likely to visit areas of the countryside industrialized by giant turbines".

#### **(b) Diminished visitation rates means fewer jobs.**

Tourism is key to Kittitas County job growth.

**Kittitas Profile, p.7: Washington State Employment Security Department's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wage data. (Dr. Don Meseck, WA State's Regional Labor Economist).**

If one analyzes employment changes in Kittitas County in the past twelve years (i.e. from 2004 to 2016) using Washington State Employment Security Department's annual average Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) data one observes that total covered employment increased from 12,494 in 2004 to 14,400 in 2016, a 1,906 job and 15.3 percent expansion. Of the 22 NAICS sectors mentioned earlier, the sector that added the most jobs during this period was NAICS 72 (accommodation and food services). It provided 1,572 jobs in 2004 versus 2,612 jobs twelve years later (in 2016) equating to a 1,040-job and 66.2-percent expansion. Many of these jobs are at local hotels and restaurants. Accommodation and food services accounted for 54.6 percent all covered jobs added (from all 22 NAICS sectors in Kittitas County) between 2004 and 2016. Looking at these data, it is safe to say that tourism is extremely important to the Kittitas County labor market. Conversely, state government (which includes jobs at Central Washington University or CWU) decreased from 1,964 in 2004 to 1,525 in 2016, a 439 job and 22.4 percent contraction during this twelve-year period.

**Conclusion:** Governor Inslee's signing of the Tourism Bill (SB5251) prioritized the tourism industry as a major vehicle for building economic welfare (i.e., county jobs & \$revenue). Much like Maine's Governor determined in January, WA needs a moratorium on the development of wind facilities to determine the extent to which these conflict with tourism-related assets in economically distressed communities.

*"I am placing a moratorium on issuing any new permits related to wind turbines until this Commission studies the economic impact that such development would have on tourism. Tourism, especially returning visitors, is a major driver for the state's economy. We cannot afford to damage our natural assets in ways that would deter visitors from returning to Maine." (Mainebiz, 1-25-2018).*

## **IMPACT ON LOCAL PROPERTY VALUES**

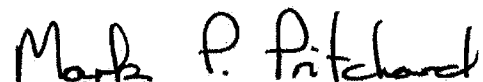
### **(a) Recent international studies underscore the adverse effects of Wind Turbines on local land values.**

A recent 2015 London School of Economics benchmark study of provides quantitative evidence on the local benefits and costs of wind developments in England and Wales. Hundreds of thousands of sales from 2000–2011 within 14km of were recorded. Results not turbines have a significant negative effect on property values in effected areas. This suggest that wind turbine visibility reduces local house prices, and the implied visual environmental costs are substantial.

2012 case research in Ontario, Canada, used two studies to report significant price diminution in land values for properties adjacent to or on the same road as Wind Turbines (Median price diminution was -32.9% and -37.3% respectively).

Thank you for considering the above concerns.

Respectfully submitted by



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Dr. Mark Pritchard