

1 TCC
2 Supplemental Testimony
3 Dennis Bates
4 EXH-5911-S

5 BEFORE THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
6 ENERGY FACILITY SITING EVALUATION COUNCIL

7 In the Matter of the Application of:

DOCKET NO. EF-210011

8 Scout Clean Energy, LLC, for
9 Horse Heaven Wind Farm, LLC,
Applicant.

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY OF TCC
WITNESS DENNIS BATES

10
11 Q: Please state your name and address

12 A: Dennis Bates, 1002 Sun Valley Way, Benton City WA, 99320.
13

14 Q: Please briefly describe your work experience and qualifications.
15

16 A: I am the Fire Chief for Benton County Fire District #2.
17

18 Q: Please describe your opinion and any concerns you have regarding the impacts
19 the Horse Heaven Hills Wind Farm Project will have.

20 A: The Fire District has concerns with the proposed Wind Turbine project on the Horse
21 Heaven Hills.

22 While not opposed to clean energy, diversifying our power grid, or embracing new
23 technologies, the district does oppose the proposed location of such a project. This
24 project raises several concerns, of which most are centered around the protection of
25 our communities.
26

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY OF TCC WITNESS
DENNIS BATES - 1

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1 The Horse Heaven Hills area is prone to wildfire. In July of this year, the Hansen Rd.
2 Fire burned from the area of Gibbon Rd. to Webber Canyon between I-82 and the
3 Horse Heaven Hills ridge line. It blackened over 6,000 acres in just one afternoon
4 during high winds. As a result of our hard-working forces on the ground and the use of
5 very effective Firefighting Aircraft, no primary residences were lost. Without the above-
6 mentioned aircraft assistance, the result could have been very different. For
7 reference, please see the attached map and photo of the Hansen Rd. Fire (page 5)¹
8 ~~and the Map showing the project's turbine placement and past fires (page 6)².~~

10 In this specific example, a wind farm on the ridge line above this fire would have
11 prevented us from using Firefighting Aircraft in the area and any area adjacent to it.
12 This result would have had an immediate and negative impact on fire suppression
13 abilities, necessary resources (air support), and the protection of our communities.

15 Turbines being placed in the area will also add to our fuel model by presenting
16 possible ignition sources. Wind turbines themselves create a lightning rod, while
17 standing in dry grass and brush areas.

21 ¹ Figure 1 on page 5 is the Fire map created by the South East Washington Interagency Team for the
22 Hansen Road – Rupert Road Fire that occurred on June 16, 2023. The map shows the location and the
23 extent of the fire perimeter. The area is located south of Interstate 82 south of Benton City, WA. The
24 fire is approximately 12 miles in length east to west and one to two miles wide north to south.

25 ~~² Figure 2 at page 6 is a CalTopo digital Geographic Information System map (www.Caltopo.com)
26 showing the fire history on the lands to the north of the Horse Heaven Hills project area. The fire history
in this area covers events from the year 2002 to present (roughly 20 years). The black dots show the
proposed Horse Heaven Hill project wind turbine locations. The orange and red zones are the individual
fire events with their name and the date they occurred. The fire perimeters in red show the extent to
which the fire burned. This map depicts an area south of Interstate 82 south of Benton City and
Kennewick in Washington State.~~

1 In addition, the potential for electrical or mechanical failure issues is multiplied by each
2 turbine added in a turbine project area. *Such was the investigated and sourced cause*
3 *of ignition for the Juniper Fire in Klickitat County, July of 2019.*
4

5 To compound the ignition sources issues are the energy storage facilities in this
6 project. Failure of a lithium battery can cause a significant fire along with health and
7 environmental issues. Fighting it isn't much of an issue with the batteries themselves
8 as the current industry guidance is to let it burn. But the wildland area around it will
9 need attention.
10

11 Additionally, the road system to these turbine farms may appear to help give us
12 access during fires and possibly create fuel breaks, however, vehicle access and road
13 usage to the turbine farm areas creates an increased use of the area, which
14 significantly raises the potential for wildfire starts -- accidental or intentional.
15

16 The proposed turbine project will have a high potential to cause an extra burden on all
17 local Emergency Services. Turbine farms can cause an increase in medical, technical
18 rescue and wildfire calls. The district serving a large portion of the Horse Heaven Hills
19 is a completely Volunteer agency. While being a very good agency, due to their rural
20 agricultural makeup they are only able to provide wildland fire and limited medical aid
21 response. They unfortunately have no structural firefighting apparatus, no technical
22 rescue equipment or training and no ambulance service in house. They are forced to
23 rely on mutual aid from neighboring agencies to fill the gaps in service. This coupled
24 with increased response times to the remote areas and limited access will result in
25 longer committed times for mutual aid resources out of their home jurisdiction.
26

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY OF TCC WITNESS

DENNIS BATES - 3

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1 ~~For reference is an attached map of the Fire Districts and their respective Fire~~
2 ~~Stations (page 7)³.~~

3
4 How will the costs of the increased calls for service be paid for? Fire and EMS
5 agencies are funded by the communities they serve. The citizens of our communities
6 will be covering the cost of these services until the first year of operation. The
7 percentage provided to the districts will not cover what is expended by Fire and EMS
8 services, nor will it ever cover the cost to our community in the event of a loss of life or
9 property.

10
11 As the proposed project stands, Benton County Fire District No. 2 cannot support it
12 due to the greater concerns for the safety of our community.

13
14
15 I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that
16 my testimony and reports are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

17 Signed this ___3___ day of September, 2023, in ___Kennewick WA.

18
19 _____DENNIS BATES_____ /s/_____

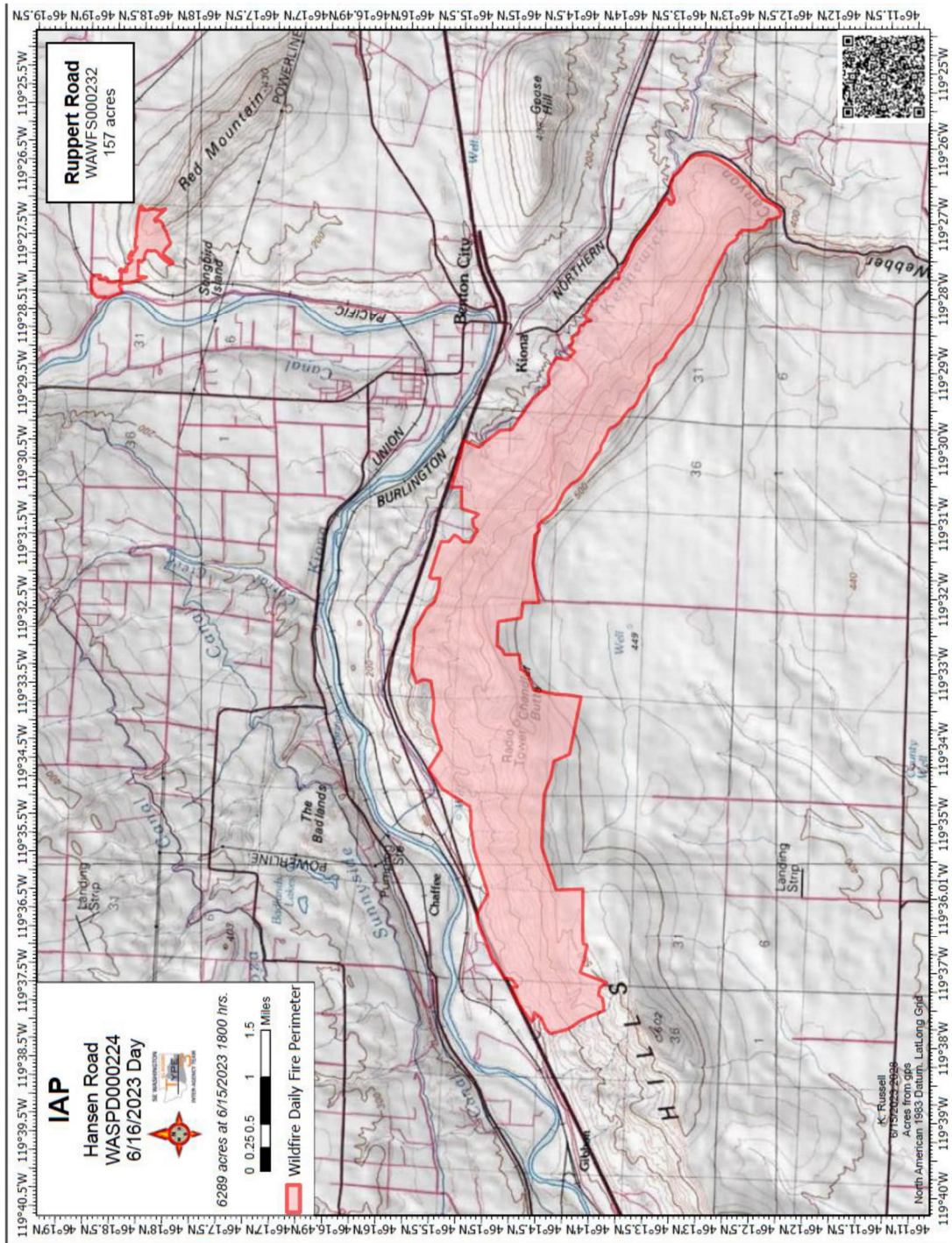
20 Printed Name
21
22
23 _____

24 ³ ~~Figure 3 on page 7 is a Benton County Geographic Information System map (<https://benton-county-gis-bentonco.hub.arcgis.com>) showing the Fire Districts and the locations of the fire stations in and~~
25 ~~around the Horse Heaven Hills Wind Farm Project area. The project is located with Benton County Fire~~
26 ~~District 1 and District 5, with a small portion in District 2. District 2 covers a section of the steep north~~
~~facing slope of the Horse Heaven Hills, along the northern boundary of the project south of Benton City~~
~~and Kennewick WA. Fire District 1 and 5 cover approximately half of the 60,000 acre project each,~~
~~roughly 12 miles from east to west, and four to six miles from north to south.~~

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY OF TCC WITNESS

DENNIS BATES - 4

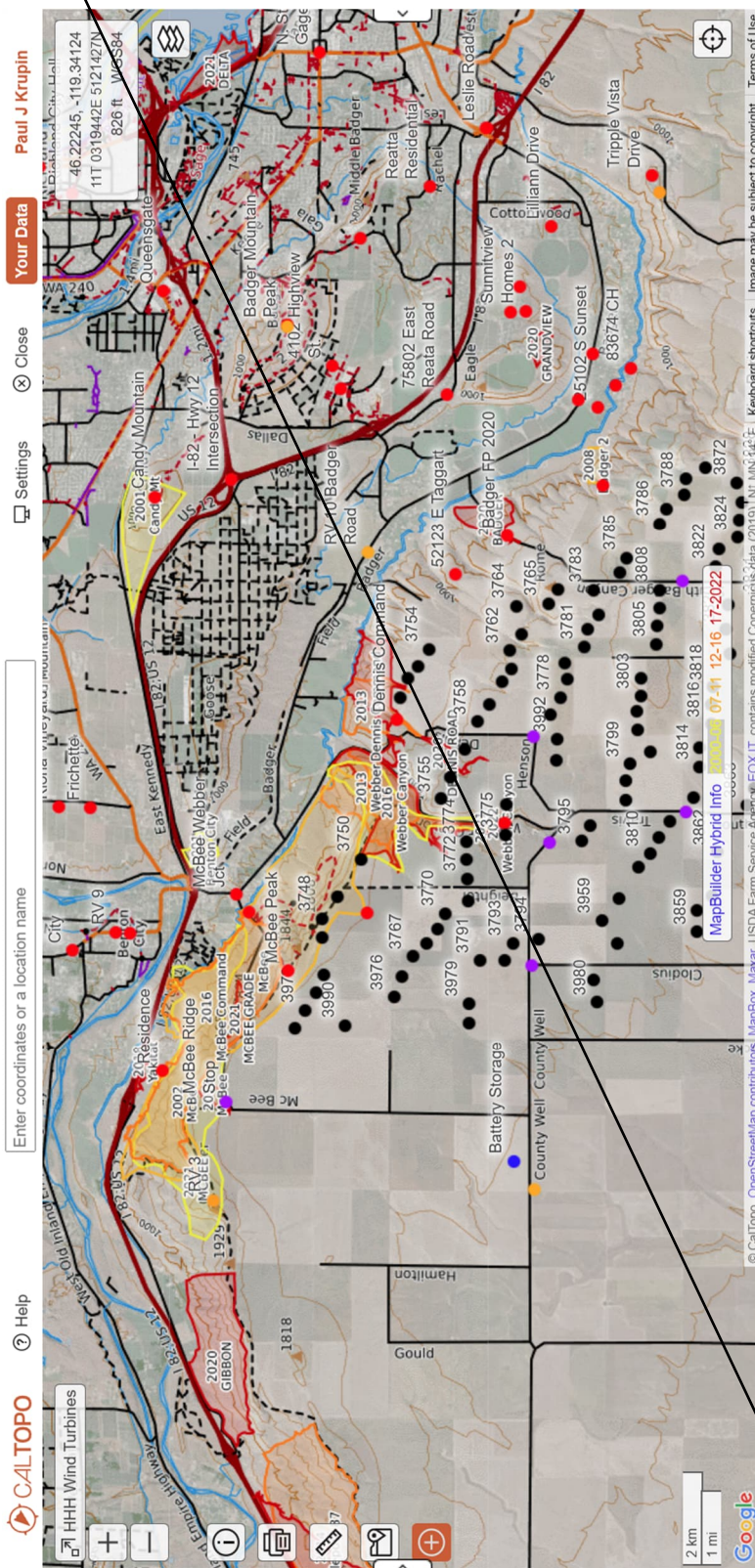
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PAGES 6 AND 7

EXCLUDED FROM
TESTIMONY

BY ORDER OF ALJ TOREM

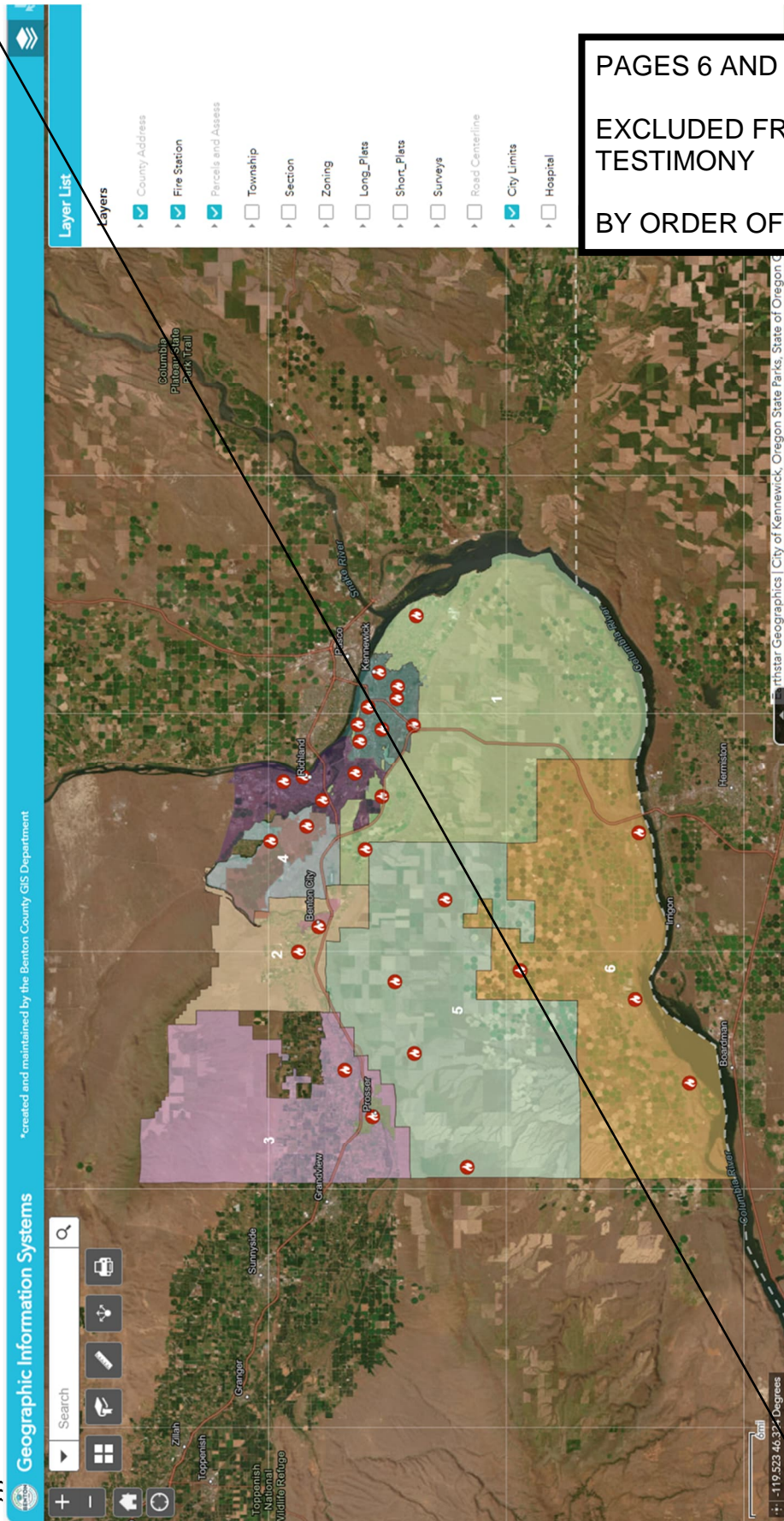
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DENNIS BATES - 6

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SUPPLE

DENNIS BATES - 7



PAGES 6 AND 7

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