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August 23, 2023

Horse Heaven Wind Farm v.

EF-210011

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Horse Heaven Wind Farm
Verbatim Record of Proceedings, Virtual Public Comment Hearing - August 23, 2023

BEFORE THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL

In the Matter of the)
Application of:)
)
)
Scout Clean Energy, LLC, for) Docket No. EF-210011
Horse Heaven Wind Farm, LLC,)
)
)
Applicant.)

VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING
VERBATIM RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

August 23, 2023

Conducted Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Reporter: John M.S. Botelho, CCR, RPR

1 APPEARANCES

2 Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council Members:

3 Kathleen Drew, Chair

4 Elizabeth Osborne
5 Department of Commerce

6 Eli Levitt
7 Department of Ecology

8 Mike Livingston
9 Department of Fish and Wildlife

10 Lenny Young
11 Department of Natural Resources

12 Stacey Brewster
13 Utilities & Transportation Commission

14 Derek Sandison
15 Department of Agriculture

16 Ed Brost
17 Benton County

18 Administrative Law Judge:

19 Adam E. Torem

20 Council Staff:

21 Sonia Bumpus Andrea Grantham

22 Ami Hafkemeyer Lisa Masengale

23 Joan Owens Alex Shiley

24 EFSEC Legal Adviser from the Washington State Office of
25 the Attorney General:

Jonathan C. Thompson

Jennifer Slocum

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1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on Wednesday,
2 August 23, 2023, at 5:30 p.m., before the Washington
3 Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council; Kathleen Drew,
4 Chair; and Adam E. Torem, Administrative Law Judge, the
5 following proceedings were had, conducted remotely, to
6 wit:

7
8 <<<<< >>>>>

9
10 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Good
11 evening, everyone. It's 5:30. It is Wednesday, August
12 23rd, 2023. And I am Adam Torem. I'm an
13 administrative law judge working with the Energy
14 Facility Site Evaluation Council, otherwise known as
15 EFSEC, on this proposed project in Benton County known
16 as the Horse Heaven wind farm.

17 We've been in the midst of adjudicative
18 proceedings this week. We started last week on Monday,
19 Tuesday, and Wednesday. Today was the third day this
20 week, and we'll be going through Friday.

21 Tonight is the public comment hearing. It's being
22 held in conformance with Revised Code of Washington
23 Title 80.50.090, Sub 4(a). A lot of legalese, but this
24 is the required statutory public hearing where the
25 Council members get to hear from interested members of

1 the public, and according to the current law,
2 interested members of the public who have commented
3 previously on some aspect of this.

4 Again, we have 33 people signed up tonight. We're
5 creating a digital recording of this. And my
6 understanding is that TVW is also broadcasting this
7 either live tonight or will have it as a live stream
8 available on their website.

9 I'm going to ask that -- again, I'm going to ask
10 that people mute their microphone so we don't have that
11 echo.

12 But I'm going to ask staff to call the roll of the
13 Council, and then I'll identify, without asking them to
14 chime in, the parties that are watching as well.

15 So if the staff would call the roll.

16 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes.

17 This is Andrea Grantham, EFSEC staff, for the
18 record, calling the Council roll.

19 First, we have EFSEC Chair.

20 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: Kathleen Drew,
21 present.

22 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of
23 Commerce.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER OSBORNE: Elizabeth
25 Osborne, present.

1 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of
2 Ecology.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVITT: Eli Levitt,
4 present.

5 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of Fish
6 and Wildlife.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LIVINGSTON: Mike
8 Livingston, present.

9 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of Natural
10 Resources.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER YOUNG: Lenny Young,
12 present.

13 MS. GRANTHAM: Utilities &
14 Transportation Commission.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWSTER: Stacey
16 Brewster, present.

17 MS. GRANTHAM: For the Horse Heaven
18 project: Department of Agriculture.

19 And Benton County.

20 That is everyone for the Council, Your Honor.

21 Also --

22 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: Ms. Grantham.

23 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes.

24 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: I think I did
25 see Mr. Sandison on, so -- from the Department --

1 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDISON: This is --
2 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: -- of
3 Agriculture.

4 Go ahead.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDISON: Yeah.
6 Chair Drew, this is Derek Sandison. I'm here. It -- I
7 got put on "mute" by your staff right when I was
8 announcing my presence.

9 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: Okay.

10 MS. GRANTHAM: Ah.

11 COUNCIL CHAIR DREW: Thank you.

12 MS. GRANTHAM: Okay. Thank you,
13 Mr. Sandison.

14 Also, while I am on, I would like to advise
15 people who are calling in, you can mute and unmute
16 yourself using "*6" or "#6." Thank you.

17 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Thank you,
18 all, for being here tonight.

19 In addition to the Council listening are the
20 attorneys for the five parties to this adjudication.

21 Scout Clean Energy is represented by the law firm
22 of Stoel Rives. They have Attorney Tim McMahan, Emily
23 Schimelpfenig, Willa Perlmutter, and Ariel Stavitsky.
24 One or all of them is watching and listening tonight.

25 The counsel for the environment is an assistant

1 attorney general by the name of Sarah Reyneveld.

2 Benton County is being represented by the law firm
3 of Menke Jackson Beyer, LLP. I think they're in
4 Yakima. And their attorneys are Kenneth Harper and
5 Aziza Foster.

6 The Confederated Tribes and Band of the Yakama
7 Nation are represented by the Yakama Nation Office of
8 Legal Counsel, and Shona Voelckers, Ethan Jones, and
9 Jessica Houston are their attorneys.

10 Tri-Cities C.A.R.E.S., a group that many of you, I
11 believe, are members of, is represented by J. Richard
12 Aramburu.

13 So they have all been working with us to develop
14 evidence during the course of our proceeding. Many of
15 you have been watching the live streams or have access
16 to the recordings. But tonight it's all about you and
17 the public comments that you're going to provide.

18 What I'd like to do is call people in the order
19 they've been on the sign-up list. I'll give you, as my
20 practice is, about three names in a row, and I'll just
21 go through that list so you kind of know when you're
22 going to be up next.

23 Hopefully you can see there's a timer on the
24 screen for two and a half minutes. We were scheduled
25 to go from 5:30 till about 8:00 tonight. And I'm

1 figuring two and a half minutes gives me a little bit
2 of wiggle room to get everything done by 8, and we go
3 from there.

4 So the first speaker is going to be Trina Baynard
5 [sic], who's associated with, it says here, Audubon
6 Washington. Then we'll hear from Karen Brun, or
7 "Brun," and then Paul Krupin.

8 Paul Krupin will be followed by Dave Sharp. And
9 when we get there, I'll tell you who's next on the
10 list.

11 So if Trina Baynard [sic] can check her mike and
12 see if we can hear her.

13 TRINA BAYARD: I am here. Can you
14 hear me?

15 JUDGE TOREM: I can.

16 So, Ms. Baynard [sic], I just want to let you know
17 I'm not going to be swearing in witnesses with an oath.
18 There's not any cross-examination tonight for anyone.
19 But we do have a court reporter. And in mercy to him,
20 I hope everybody will speak slowly and deliberately.

21 If we do have any sound interference during your
22 time, please pause so we can mute the open mike and
23 then let you be heard. So if you hear any
24 interference, just pause, and we'll add that time back
25 in for you.

1 Any questions, Ms. Baynard [sic]?

2 TRINA BAYARD: (Indiscernible.)

3 JUDGE TOREM: Ms. Baynard [sic], I'm
4 not sure if we can hear you.

5 TRINA BAYARD: No questions.

6 JUDGE TOREM: All right.

7 TRINA BAYARD: Can you hear me?

8 JUDGE TOREM: The floor is yours.

9 Go ahead.

10 TRINA BAYARD: Thank you.

11 And good evening. My name is Dr. Trina Bayard. I
12 am the director of bird conservation at Audubon
13 Washington, a state office of the National Audubon
14 Society.

15 Climate change poses a severe threat to birds and
16 people. Audubon supports the build-out of renewable
17 energy in a way that's compatible with birds, wildlife,
18 tribal rights, and cultural heritage. Unfortunately,
19 the proposed design for Horse Heaven wind project
20 indicates that up to 69 turbines may be sited within
21 the two-mile core area buffer for ferruginous hawk,
22 which we believe will cause high-magnitude, constant,
23 unavoidable negative environmental impacts to the state
24 engaged species.

25 As currently proposed, the environmental review

1 documents do not provide assurance that the builder
2 will mitigate these impacts to the extent that's
3 possible. The project also creates barriers to
4 wildlife movement and habitat connectivity in a
5 landscape that's already heavily fragmented.

6 Wildlife and habitat experts have already weighed
7 in on the record with specific reasonable and
8 achievable measures that can help avoid, minimize, and
9 mitigate negative impacts to imperilled wildlife.

10 These common-sense measures would help maintain
11 landscape connectivity and mitigate appropriately for
12 habitat loss.

13 These recommendations, if adopted, provide a
14 pathway for EFSEC to support a more environmentally
15 responsible build-out of the project, which would be
16 better aligned with the State's other investments in
17 shrub-steppe ecosystem conservation.

18 Audubon requests that EFSEC adopt a project
19 decision that incorporates the wildlife and habitat
20 mitigation measures recommended by the State Department
21 of Fish and Wildlife, the Yakama Nation, and described
22 in our January 31st draft environmental impact
23 statement comment letter.

24 These measures include, among other things:

25 Committing to micro-siting decisions that

1 eliminate turbines within two miles of ferruginous hawk
2 nest locations and between Sheep and Webber Canyons;

3 Mitigating appropriately for habitat loss across
4 the entire project lease boundary area;

5 Reducing the density of turbines in the four-mile
6 canyon linkage area;

7 Assessing the need for a curtailment plan;

8 Designing the east solar field to eliminate the
9 creation of a pinch point for wildlife connectivity;

10 Conducting habitat restoration within the
11 four-mile canyon linkage area;

12 And affirming the scope and role of the project's
13 technical advisory committee as a post-constructive --
14 construction adaptive management committee.

15 We appreciate everyone's hard work on this project
16 and for the opportunity to comment. I will also
17 provide my comments in writing for the record. Thank
18 you.

19 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Ms. Bayard.

20 The next speaker is going to be Karen Brun, or
21 "Brun."

22 KAREN BRUN: This is working, right?

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yeah.

24 KAREN BRUN: (Indiscernible.)

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yep.

1 JUDGE TOREM: Do we have Karen Brun?

2 KAREN BRUN: Yes.

3 Can you hear me?

4 JUDGE TOREM: I can.

5 KAREN BRUN: Was that a "can" or a
6 "can't"?

7 JUDGE TOREM: Yes, I can, yes.

8 So when you're ready, please go ahead.

9 KAREN BRUN: Okay. My name is Karen
10 Brun. I'm a Kennewick resident.

11 As a resident of the Tri-Cities for 43 years, I
12 have grave concerns about this project. In my opinion,
13 it is much too close to one of the largest urban areas
14 in the state; unprecedented for Washington, if not the
15 entire country.

16 The project includes more turbines than are needed
17 to provide the amount of power that can be injected
18 into the BPA system, and they are taller than any
19 Washington State turbines installed to date. The
20 applicant has not provided any alternatives to reduce
21 the number of turbines, to move them, or to replace
22 part of them with solar.

23 The turbines along the ridgeline pose a major
24 threat to aerial firefighting capability. The FFA
25 disallows any obstruction 499 feet and higher within

1 20,000 feet from the ends of a runway. As the planes
2 take off and land, they are traveling at the same
3 height and speed as those firefighting planes dropping
4 fire retardant. The same buffer should apply for this
5 project, as turbines on the ridgeline will severely
6 impede, if not make impossible, the ability to fight
7 fires aerially.

8 In addition, there will be a significant
9 detrimental impact on the viewshed and corresponding
10 property values of many very high-end homes. In spite
11 of the application -- applicant's contention, there
12 will be an impact to property values. If Scout truly
13 believes there will be none, then the company should be
14 willing to operate property value protection guarantee.

15 In listening to the adjudication hearings, it is
16 apparent that there is a bias against our community.
17 As the case in point, the e-mail communication about
18 who could participate in this public hearing was
19 incorrect, causing much confusion and, in my opinion,
20 significantly reduced the number of people who are
21 actually participating.

22 In testimony this morning, one of the
23 participating landowners read a poem his grandmother
24 wrote on first seeing the Horse Heaven Hills. In my
25 opinion, she would be appalled that her grandson is

1 allowing wind turbines to be installed on the magical
2 land she loved so much.

3 This project is being proposed by an out-of-state
4 corporation with foreign investors who will walk
5 away -- once this industrial complex on agricultural,
6 historical, and recreational land is installed --
7 laughing all the way to the bank.

8 Please do not approve it in its current
9 configuration. Thank you.

10 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Ms. Brun.

11 Paul Krupin will be followed by Dave Sharp and
12 then Judy, it's either "Guse" or "Gusé," G-u-s-e, and
13 then Mike Minelli.

14 Mr. Krupin, good evening. Nice to see you again.
15 Floor is floors.

16 PAUL KRUPIN: Good evening,
17 everyone. Thank you.

18 My name is Paul Krupin. I'm a board member of TC
19 C.A.R.E.S., and I was also -- was on today.

20 Tri-City C.A.R.E.S. is fighting this project. We
21 believe that EFSEC must deny or significantly reduce
22 the number of wind turbines because it will not produce
23 abundant clean energy and will cause significant
24 environmental, social, and economic impacts to the
25 citizens who live here.

1 The adjudication process and EFSEC are failing to
2 ensure this project is safe and have the lowest
3 environmental impact possible. The adjudication
4 process has been made difficult, expensive, and
5 cumbersome, and the risks and consequence of this
6 project are substantial.

7 Judge Torem has been rejecting my testimony and
8 others' containing important evidence that shows that
9 the benefits of this project are dramatically
10 outweighed by the impacts to the environment and the
11 serious risks to the health and welfare of people.

12 His decisions are preventing the preservation with
13 reasonable information describing the severity of the
14 impacts to the project from the Council.

15 His decisions are preventing the identification,
16 description, and evaluation of reasonable siting
17 alternatives. This information is needed by EFSEC to
18 fulfill its responsibilities and take appropriate
19 measures to minimize the impacts on the environment and
20 the cost impacts on people.

21 Tri-Cities is going to be harmed by unacceptable
22 impacts of this project unless it is substantially
23 reduced in size and highly visible turbines are pushed
24 back further away from the prominent, iconic Horse
25 Heaven Hills ridgeline.

1 The project is an all-or-nothing proposition, and
2 EFSEC is failing to identify and evaluate the siting
3 restrictions that will effectively reduce the
4 significant impacts on the local area.

5 Now, there has been inadequate engagement on the
6 part of the counsel for the environment. Her office is
7 supposed to protect the people and the environment.
8 She has barely been active.

9 The company wants to site turbines on areas that
10 are sacred to the tribes. Company mitigation proposals
11 to protect endangered species and wildlife are dismally
12 inadequate.

13 EFSEC has failed to investigate compliance issues
14 with Benton County land-use requirements and
15 obligations. The project will destroy the views, the
16 horizon of the Horse Heaven Hills for most of the
17 Tri-Cities and will urbanize character of the entire
18 region.

19 There is no impact on property values, like Karen
20 said, then there should be a property value reduction
21 guarantee. Doesn't seem to be something that this
22 applicant is contemplating.

23 Rest of my testimony to date was stricken from the
24 adjudication report by Judge Torem. However, I've
25 submitted my testimony is attached to my public

1 comments. Thank you.

2 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Mr. Krupin.
3 Dave Sharp.

4 DAVE SHARP: Thank you, Judge Torem,
5 for the opportunity to come today. I am on the board
6 of Tri-Cities C.A.R.E.S. but for this comment will be
7 speaking from the heart as a citizen of Benton County.

8 The developer has been in this area for over six
9 years and has yet to submit a final project. You have
10 heard the main issues: Too close, too big, too many,
11 too impactful, recreational impacts, no commitment to
12 renewables, Native American cultural issues. Those are
13 issues. But there's another issue.

14 The perception of the EFSEC process to the average
15 citizen here is that it's unfair and the outcome has
16 already been predetermined; publicized by a chief
17 executive openly committed to a green agenda, no matter
18 the cost; EFSEC leadership with the intent to please
19 their boss; and to other voting Council members that
20 may fear no vote would be a career ender.

21 The developer has chosen to lay a generic
22 application at the feet of EFSEC they believe can be
23 changed even after the adjudicative process and
24 issuance of the SCA. As lead agency, EFSEC has a
25 responsibility to ensure that an unbiased EIS is

1 presented with reasonable alternatives and to provide
2 stipulated guardrails to manage future project changes.

3 We are hopeful for a fair adjudication decision
4 that balances the many impactful issues. As a resident
5 and property owner impacted by this project, I desire
6 only the quiet use and enjoyment of my property without
7 the nuisances brought on by poorly sited wind projects.

8 Thank you very much.

9 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Thank you,
10 Mr. Sharp.

11 I appreciate the very personal opinions and
12 feelings being put out tonight. I'm hoping we can
13 focus on the project and the impacts, itself, and try
14 not to stray into too much, I'll call it character
15 assassination, for lack of a better word. I don't want
16 to have any personal conflicts come out tonight or feel
17 any intimidation of Council members or others going on.

18 I recognize that many of you have interacted with
19 me or other members of the Council, but let's keep the
20 focus on the project and go forward from there.

21 Judy, is it "Guse" or "Gusé," is going to be
22 followed by Mike Minelli and Karen Brutzman, and after
23 that, Barbara Thompson.

24 JUDY GUSE: It's Judy Guse, but I'll
25 take "Gusé." That sounds good.

1 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Judy Guse,
2 you're next. Floor is yours.

3 JUDY GUSE: Nuclear energy is
4 cleaner, cheaper, abundant, and safe. It produces
5 massive amounts of energy cleanly and efficiently. It
6 would take dozens of wind and solar projects covering
7 thousands of acres of land that would match what a
8 single nuclear power plant can produce.

9 Wind power requires 30 to 45 times as much land
10 and about ten times as much concrete and steel to
11 produce the equivalent power of nuclear. Building one
12 wind turbine requires 900 tons of steel, 2500 tons of
13 concrete, and 45 tons of plastic. Solar power requires
14 even more cement, steel, and glass, not to mention
15 other metals.

16 Renewable energy is a contradiction. Wind and
17 solar machines and batteries are built from
18 nonrenewable materials, and they wear out. Old
19 equipment must be decommissioned, generating millions
20 of tons of waste. If hydro and nuclear power in the
21 Pacific Northwest stay in place, we would meet a
22 hypothetical hundred percent clean electric goal in our
23 region.

24 Using wind and solar power would require a land
25 area of 20 to a hundred times the area of Seattle and

1 Portland combined. Wind development will only increase
2 our electric rates. Our hydro and nuclear energy have
3 given our area low electric rates for years.

4 Hydropower is by far the largest renewable
5 worldwide, producing over twice as much energy as wind
6 and over four times as much as solar. The Tri-Cities
7 has two sources of renewable and clean energy power
8 generation: The Snake River dams and the Columbia
9 Generating Plant. Each of these run circles around
10 wind energy and generate consistent energy at more than
11 95 percent capacity even if the wind doesn't blow.

12 The Northwest is America's leader in hydropower.
13 The cheap electricity is a draw for new businesses, for
14 ongoing research at PNNL, for business and industry,
15 and for consumers. Hydropower is the greenest, most
16 reliable energy source we have.

17 Hydropower fits nicely within the energy gridwork
18 in that it can respond to energy load changes and still
19 be continuously operating. Wind doesn't even come
20 close. Scout's claim that the project will offset 3.5
21 million tons of CO2 is not true. There is little
22 fossil fuel in Washington State, and this wind power
23 will only displace hydro, which again is reliable and
24 consistent renewable and will not have an effect on
25 carbon emissions no matter where the energy ends up.

1 Thank you.

2 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Ms. Guse.

3 All right. Mike Minelli, followed by Karen
4 Brutzman, Barbara Thompson, and Brent Strecker.

5 MICHAEL (MIKE) MINELLI: Thank you,
6 Judge Torem.

7 I'm wondering why we went through two years of the
8 SEPA process when the outcome was already known before
9 we started. I can say that after hearing Governor
10 Inslee's statement at the United Nations Climate
11 Conference last November, as quoted by the Capital
12 Press November 14th, 2022. He said, quote, "Regulatory
13 reforms are needed to prevent local opponents from
14 delaying projects. Regulatory reforms are needed to
15 prevent local opponents from delaying projects."

16 When Governor Inslee said regulatory reforms are
17 needed, he meant EFSEC, which is made up of his
18 appointees, and they will regulate those reforms. When
19 the governor says to prevent local opponents from
20 delaying projects, he meant once recommended by EFSEC,
21 he will approve the Horse Heaven project while Benton
22 County and the tribes have been stripped of their
23 authority.

24 The SEPA process has been carried out with a clear
25 bias by Chair Kathleen Drew in favor of the applicant

1 and not the wishes of the vast majority of the people
2 of Benton County.

3 The Horse Heaven wind project will be built as
4 previously planned. And EFSEC, employees of the
5 governor, including Chair Kathleen Drew, will vote to
6 reflect Governor Inslee's clearly stated wishes. And
7 we, the people of Benton County, will have been
8 successfully silenced. Silenced by our own government.

9 JUDGE TOREM: Karen Brutzman is
10 next.

11 KAREN BRUTZMAN: Hello. I'm Karen
12 Brutzman. I've lived in Kennewick for nearly 40 years.
13 I'm concerned about climate change and support the idea
14 of clean energy, but I do not believe that our Horse
15 Heaven Hills are an appropriate location for the
16 project proposed by Scout Clean Energy.

17 "Clean energy" is a misnomer for this project.
18 Concrete leaves a huge carbon footprint. The
19 environmental impact of concrete, its manufacture, and
20 applications are complex, driven in part by direct
21 impacts of construction and infrastructure as well as
22 by CO2 emissions.

23 The cement industry is one of the main producers
24 of carbon dioxide, a potent greenhouse gas. The
25 Tri-Cities are already a hot spot for ozone health

1 risk.

2 The Tri-Cities Ozone Precursor Study final report,
3 dated December 12th, 2017, was prepared by the
4 Laboratory for Atmospheric Research, the Department of
5 Civil and Environmental Engineering, and Washington
6 State University. It can be found by following the
7 link I provided in the written comments.

8 This study was conducted because air quality
9 managers noticed the daily predictive air quality
10 forecast model operated by Washington State University
11 consistently showed elevated ozone in the Tri-Cities
12 area. The ozone in this study is attributed to car
13 emissions, but we can't ignore the pollution caused by
14 the millions and millions of tons of concrete that will
15 be used to erect these gigantic wind turbines and the
16 emissions from the trucks transporting concrete and
17 water to the work site.

18 **A standard 328-foot-tall wind turbine requires**
19 **30,000 tons of cement for the foundation. There are**
20 **244 wind turbines that will be sited in the Horse**
21 **Heaven Hills wind farm. That means approximately 12**
22 **million tons of concrete. That's a lot of cement**
23 **trucks.**

24 **Building this project is going to require at least**
25 **220,000 gallons of water per day for dust control and**

1 construction. Our community does not have enough water
2 to support the construction phase of this project.
3 That means an armada of forty to fifty 5,000-gallon
4 trucks will be driving from the port of Walla Walla on
5 highways and county roads each day for several months
6 of the year. We already live in a dusty place. This
7 will only make it worse.

8 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you,
9 Ms. Stutzman -- Brutzman.

10 Barbara Thompson, followed by Brent Strecker, and
11 then Richard Yrjanson.

12 Do we have Barbara Thompson?

13 All right. I'll come back to her.

14 Brent Strecker?

15 BRENT STRECKER: Yeah. Can you hear
16 me okay?

17 JUDGE TOREM: I can.

18 BRENT STRECKER: Okay. Great.

19 EFSEC Council, please listen to the citizens,
20 community leaders, and power supply experts living here
21 in the Tri-Cities. You've received countless reasons
22 why this project (videoconference technical
23 difficulties) detrimental to our community. It is a
24 fact this project will do very little to help solve
25 power needs in Washington State.

1 At this point, based on facts, it is clear the
2 future's in nuclear power. Please focus on expediting
3 and expanding on reliable, safe, clean, small, modular
4 reactors that can be built right here in our area and
5 not pollute the Tri-Cities or the state with this
6 unreliable and wasteful wind and solar project.

7 As we travel on almost every highway leading out
8 of the Tri-Cities, there are thousands of turbines
9 littering the landscape. Please don't add even bigger
10 700-foot Space Needle-size turbines looming over our
11 homes and town in the valley below.

12 The area south of town is growing with dozens of
13 new homes and homes under construction. I live within
14 a mile or two of the proposed turbines and enjoy the
15 area on my bike weekly, along with many others. While
16 out, I almost always see endangered ferruginous and
17 northern harrier hawks and hate to think what will
18 happen when the thousands and thousands of geese flock
19 here and -- and also the endangered sandhill cranes
20 that I see and hear.

21 I see and hear these birds. It's -- they're very
22 distinct. So, anyway, they're going to -- they're
23 going to migrate right into the path of these
24 hundred-mile-an-hour blade tips.

25 My wife and I have put our heart and soul into our

1 home, and now you have the power to take that away with
2 your recommendations to the governor. So we plead with
3 you to do what is based on facts and not add any tiny
4 percent of unreliable power that will do little to
5 nothing to solve the state's power needs at the expense
6 of our community. That's all.

7 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you,
8 Mr. Strecker.

9 Richard Yrjanson. And then I'll come back to
10 Barbara Thompson. And then we'll go forward with Art
11 Kelly and Pat Loera.

12 Do we have Richard Yr- -- it's Y-r-j-a-n-s-o-n.
13 I'm sure I'm butchering it.

14 All right. Art Kelly?

15 I know we had several people that signed up and
16 were simply going to submit comments in writing. So if
17 that's Barbara Thompson or Richard Yrjanson or Pat --
18 Art Kelly, thank you for the written comments.

19 Do we have Pat Loera? She'd be followed by Joe
20 Loera. Are either of them here?

21 I'll come back around for those just in case
22 there's a technical difficulty.

23 Jerry Carlson. And then Pam Minelli and Rylan
24 Grimes.

25 Is Jerry Carlson here?

1 Is Pam Minelli here?

2 PAM MINELLI: Good evening, Judge
3 Torem. This is Pam Minelli. I'm a member of
4 Tri-Cities C.A.R.E.S. and also a resident in Kennewick.

5 Tri-Citians support clean energy as shown by Nine
6 Canyon wind project, regional hydropower, and the
7 nuclear power plant managed by Energy Northwest, but
8 there is a strong local opposition to the enormous
9 Horse Heaven wind project.

10 It is too close to our homes, too close to the
11 ferruginous hawk nests, too close to our communities
12 and farms. Homeowners that paid extra for view
13 properties will surely experience a loss when turbines
14 industrialize their views. Less than 50 farmers will
15 experience financial gain from their leases for this
16 project, but their gain will result in the financial
17 loss for thousands of homeowners.

18 This project is also too big. Turbines strung 25
19 miles from Benton City to Finley on the Horse Heaven
20 Hills totally fills every mile of our treasured rural
21 views. The project is so big that Washington Fish and
22 Wildlife stated in its letter to EFSEC that is -- it is
23 likely impossible to mitigate its impact on wildlife
24 and their inhabit- -- and their habitats.

25 And the wind towers at 45, 499, or 671 feet are

1 way too tall. Add the 2,000-foot elevation of the
2 Horse Heaven Hills to the turbines' height, and these
3 enormous turbines will stick out like a sore thumb.
4 Will they impede aerial firefighting so essential to
5 protecting Benton County from recent fires? Will the
6 Tri-Cities continue to be a tourism destination for
7 wine and outdoor enthusiasts when our rural landscapes
8 are industrialized?

9 With one sole Benton County representative and six
10 Governor Inslee appointees as the voting members of
11 EFSEC, the odds of this-type project being denied are
12 slim. But we remain hopeful that EFSEC members will
13 consider the Washington Fish and Wildlife
14 recommendations for protecting wildlife and also hear
15 local opposition.

16 I request that EFSEC votes "no" on the current
17 plan for the Horse Heaven wind project. This project
18 is too close, too big, and the towers are way too high.
19 Thank you.

20 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, ma'am.

21 For those that are on "mute" and want to come off
22 "mute" -- perhaps you're one of the people I called and
23 you're not responding -- remember "*6" or "#6."

24 So I'm going to go through. If Barbara Thompson
25 is out there, let us know, if you're having trouble

1 with "mute." Richard Yrjanson, Art Kelly, and Pat and
2 Joe Loera, if you have a problem with the "mute," let
3 us know -- as much as you can -- with "*6" or "#6."

4 I see Rylan Grimes, and you're our next speaker,
5 sir. If you come off "mute," we'll set the clock for
6 you. Good evening.

7 RYLAN GRIMES: All right. My name
8 is Rylan Grimes, and I'm an organizer for the
9 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local
10 Union 112 representing over 1300 electricians in
11 southeastern Washington and north- -- northeastern
12 Oregon.

13 I'm a lifelong resident of the Tri-Cities, having
14 graduated from Southridge High School in 2003, and a
15 current resident of Benton County just outside of West
16 Richland. IBEW Local 112 supports this project because
17 of the many good family-wage jobs it will bring to
18 where many of us live both during construction and
19 after. And because Scout has entered into an agreement
20 with the building trades' unions, it will ensure that
21 all the hiring for this project will be local, with our
22 neighbors benefitting directly from this work.

23 The area needs this power for projects like the
24 Atlas Agro fertilizer plant in Richland and the new
25 Darigold in Pasco. And while we are looking forward to

1 the small modular nuclear reactors, we can't afford to
2 wait seven to ten years for DOE to stop dragging their
3 feet and get the ball rolling. We believe in an
4 all-above approach to power generation that includes
5 renewables such as the Horse Heaven wind project.

6 I'd also like to talk about one thing that gets
7 overshadowed in this, and it's the landowners and their
8 stake in this. I worked on a state-line wind project,
9 and I've seen firsthand how limited impact on the
10 farmers' operations of their -- for their yield. While
11 they may give up some farmable acreage to the footprint
12 of the towers, the leasing fees they get from this will
13 extend the limited impact to their crop yield and allow
14 them to continue farming their land for decades.

15 Why should we stand in the way of local farmers
16 supplementing their income so that they aren't someday
17 forced to sell their land to some megacorporation or
18 China, as Representative Newhouse has been actively
19 fighting against?

20 So, in summary, the power staying here, it will
21 employ local workforce, and will keep our local farmers
22 in business for the foreseeable future. The pros of
23 this project far outweigh the cons. And I thank
24 Council for the opportunity to speak today.

25 JUDGE TOREM: Next speaker is going

1 to be Jordan Ryckman or "Ryckman." And then I see
2 Phyllis Riikonen on one of the screens; she'll be after
3 him. And then Gloria Cummins.

4 Do we have Jordan Ryckman or "Ryckman"?

5 I'm going to turn to you, Phyllis, is it -- tell
6 me how to pronounce that last name.

7 PHYLLIS RIIKONEN: Hi. Can you hear
8 me?

9 JUDGE TOREM: I can.

10 PHYLLIS RIIKONEN: It's Phyllis
11 Riikonen.

12 JUDGE TOREM: All right. You're on.

13 PHYLLIS RIIKONEN: Okay.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you
15 today. Honestly, I'm terrified of public speaking, but
16 I thought it was important to come before you to
17 represent the concerned citizens of the Tri-Cities area
18 who have not been given a vote either for or against
19 the Horse Heaven Hills wind farm project.

20 **A project this large that will have an effect on**
21 **the residents and business owners of this community in**
22 **so many different ways should be put before the local**
23 **residents on a ballot.**

24 **For point of reference, my husband and I live on a**
25 **ridge between two ravines in the Horse Heaven Hills at**

1 the end of Taggart Road. Living here, we have been
2 amazed at the number of -- number and variety of birds
3 as well as deer up here in the hills that we have
4 witnessed. We have an owl who visits frequently and
5 hoots right outside our home at night, and a grouse or
6 a partridge family, as close as I can tell, that has 14
7 members we see popping in and out of the natural
8 vegetation we have left around our home.

9 The hawks are beautiful to watch as they ride the
10 currents through the ravines, looking for their next
11 meal. It is my understanding that the ferruginous
12 hawks are on the Washington State endangered list and
13 that the -- their recommendation is to preserve the
14 shrub-steppe that provides their hunting grounds.

15 During the last migration season, I witnessed a
16 large flock of Canada geese flying up one of the
17 ravines, likely on a stopover on their journey. I
18 watched as they flew towards the south, slowly gaining
19 altitude as they jostled for their place in their V
20 formation. This all took place at low elevation, right
21 over the area of proposed turbines. Another day,
22 hundreds of white snow geese were camped out in a field
23 behind our home, again in the proposed area.

24 These hills are abundant with geese finding a
25 place to rest for the night, and I often see these

1 low-flying flocks as they're coming in or leaving on
2 their journey. We are most definitely in a migration
3 path where the birds can enjoy the nearby waters of the
4 rivers as well as the Horse Heaven farmlands for a safe
5 place to stop over.

6 A wind turbine farm, especially one so many miles
7 in length, would be a huge detriment to all the
8 wildlife patterns and alter the natural ecosystem of
9 our area.

10 And, of course, in this area, we are always
11 concerned about wildfires and how quickly and how far
12 they can travel. The local agencies have stated how
13 difficult it would be to have air support around the
14 wind turbines if a wildfire were in those areas.

15 I know that many of those who come from greener
16 parts of this state feel that the Tri-Cities area is
17 just a brown spot on the map, but please don't discount
18 those of us who can see the beauty in the broad
19 expanses and vistas that the Horse Heaven Hills
20 provides that will forever be altered if this project
21 goes through.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you,
24 Ms. Riikonen. I appreciate you coming out despite the
25 public speaking fear. I understand that's either that

1 or death that's highest on the list. So thank you for
2 being here tonight.

3 PHYLLIS RIIKONEN: Thank you.

4 JUDGE TOREM: Gloria Cummins.

5 GLORIA CUMMINS: Yes.

6 JUDGE TOREM: Yes, ma'am. You're
7 up.

8 GLORIA CUMMINS: Thank you.

9 I understand this project is on fast approval
10 track to start construction this year. Even though
11 there was no public scoping, only public comment on
12 scope, and the project has connective actions that have
13 not been evaluated, and that a sorely deficient DEIS
14 was issued with only one alternative against a
15 no-action alternative that did not provide life cycle
16 cumulative impact cost analysis, and that does not
17 comply with the Benton County Growth Management Act
18 land-use plan and has a scope that is continuously
19 being modified and is being imposed on local residents
20 in an area with lack of sufficient aerial resources for
21 wildfire management and with no contract to where the
22 energy will be transmitted to on transmission lines
23 that predate wind and solar capacity and that the
24 potential to take 600 raptors and 13,000 birds
25 annually, according to the study, within a crane

1 migration flyway and is without sufficient
2 justification of need by disregarding the fact that
3 Washington State energy needs are currently being met
4 by 88 percent renewable hydroelectric and nuclear,
5 non-carbon-emitting alternatives.

6 The list goes on due to time constraints. I've
7 submitted my January comments to the Council for the
8 record. In the end, the people of Benton County will
9 be paying the price of higher electric bills,
10 significant health and safety risks, permanent loss of
11 scenic viewshed and wildlife, and the environmental
12 cleanup of nonrecyclable toxic waste indefinitely.

13 In summary, this project should not be allowed to
14 proceed, based on all of the reasons presented here.
15 Thankfully, there is a SEPA appeals process.

16 I appreciate your time. Thank you.

17 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you,
18 Ms. Cummins.

19 We'll have next Patrick Grengs, II, followed by
20 Sam Dechter and Kathy Dechter. And I know Sam is here.
21 I can see him.

22 All right. Patrick Grengs, II.

23 PATRICK D. GRENGS, II: Hello. My
24 name is Patrick Grengs. As a 30-year Tri-Citian, I'm
25 opposed to this project and offer the following

1 rationale for my opposition.

2 First, I'm the owner of 40 acres in West Richland
3 near Sand Hill. My property has 120-degrees view
4 toward the west, including Rattlesnake, Red, Candy, and
5 Badger Mountains. The destruction of the visual
6 landscape with these unsightly monstrosities will
7 reduce the value of my property, both me and any future
8 developer. The increased construction traffic raises a
9 potential for accidents on the roadways and will
10 certainly exacerbate traffic congestion. All the
11 trucks rolling along local roads will create dust,
12 noise, and increase hazards.

13 Second, the project is not physically viable. All
14 wind power must be supplemented by hot standby power.
15 The additional cost of these plants act as a multiplier
16 in the cost of wind power, wherein the multiplier is
17 typically three or greater. Nearing the end of its
18 15-year expected life cycle, a wind turbine has a
19 maintenance cost that exceeds the wholesale rate of the
20 energy produced. This requires that the turbine be
21 replaced.

22 The natural resources cost to mine the minerals
23 and manufacture, fabricate, ship, install, maintain,
24 and decommission a turbine exceeds the sum of its
25 intermittent power that's generated over the course of

1 its lifetime.

2 Third, wind power is unaffordable, unreliable, and
3 dangerous. Where wind power has been implemented on a
4 large scale, power costs have increased dramatically.
5 This can be seen throughout countries in Europe as well
6 as southern California. The winds are intermittent,
7 and as such, power produced is not reliable. In
8 Germany, where wind turbines litter the landscape,
9 there are long periods of dunkelflaute, weeks and
10 months where there's little wind. The Tri-Cities
11 experiences a similar phenomena where the wind turbines
12 essentially stand idle.

13 The wind turbine debacle in Texas in the winter of
14 2021 was just one example where the failure of wind
15 power in the context of frozen turbine blades caused
16 catastrophic failure of the electric grid. This
17 failure then caused a surge in excess deaths, which was
18 not experienced in neighboring states.

19 To summarize, electricity produced by nuclear
20 plants and hydro dams provides the most cost-effective
21 and reliable means of energy for Washington State. The
22 nuclear plants and dams do not shut down at night.
23 They do not shut down when the wind stops.
24 Climate-change alarmism is, in fact, less a matter of
25 science and more a matter of politics and

1 taxpayer-financed corporatism. I see this wind project
2 as both a criminal waste of resources and the
3 application of unnecessary technology that will destroy
4 the beauty and value of property owned by individuals
5 throughout the Tri-Cities. Thank you.

6 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Mr. Grengs.

7 Samuel Dechter, you're up.

8 SAMUEL J. DECHTER: Am I on?

9 JUDGE TOREM: You are.

10 SAMUEL J. DECHTER: Thank you.

11 I have several points I would like to make, and I
12 appreciate this opportunity.

13 Final approval for the Horse Heaven wind farm
14 project should rest with Benton County and other local
15 government agencies. This would more appropriately
16 reflect the desires, concerns, values, and priorities
17 of the local community.

18 Similarly, determination of satisfactory
19 operational performance to meet permitted conditions
20 and operational parameters should be in the hands of
21 local agencies and not in the hands of the facility
22 owner-operator.

23 If the project is allowed to proceed, it should be
24 moved away from the crest of the Horse Heaven Hills and
25 relocated southward several miles toward the Columbia

1 River, where it will not be visible from the Tri-Cities
2 and will not present an eyesore to our citizens and
3 visitors. It reminds me of H. G. Wells' War of the
4 Worlds when the martians invaded with their large
5 towers.

6 I'm concerned for the wildlife that will be
7 displaced by construction and operation of this
8 project. I'm concerned also for the birds that will be
9 endangered and destroyed by the operating wind turbine
10 blades and will have their historic flight patterns
11 disrupted and breeding grounds destroyed. If we can
12 fight to protect our salmon, we should fight equally as
13 hard to protect our birds and other wildlife.

14 Our highly desirable scenic views, important to
15 local businesses and attractive to out-of-town
16 visitors, will be lost. This will negatively impact
17 the local and regional economy through loss of
18 business, loss of visitors, and loss of revenue. We
19 must prevent outside companies from destroying our
20 beautiful landscape scenery by repeating the
21 destruction we see along the Columbia River to Portland
22 and along the State Highway 12 corridor to Walla Walla.

23 Outdoor recreation will be negatively impacted by
24 a loss of areas for hiking, off-road biking, bicycling,
25 bird-watching, and other activities.

1 Now, this country has a waste management problem
2 with disposal of nuclear materials from nuclear power
3 plants. What will happen with the wind turbine
4 nonbiodegradable materials when they break or when
5 their lifetime has expired? Will they be stored,
6 piled, or buried right here in our own backyard? Will
7 the land given over to the wind farm be restored to its
8 present condition?

9 I thank you very much for this opportunity to
10 present my concerns and issues with Horse Heaven wind
11 farm project. And Kathy Dechter is ill and will not
12 speak tonight.

13 JUDGE TOREM: I'm sorry to hear
14 she's ill, but thank you for letting me know. We won't
15 call her name, then.

16 The next list of folks we'll go to is Karen
17 Batishko, Barbara Buckmaster, and Keith Brutzman,
18 followed by Chris Wright and Greg Wagner.

19 So is Karen, is it Batishko or "Batishko" out
20 there? "*6" or "#6" to unmute.

21 Barbara Buckmaster, I saw you on the call-in list.

22 BARBARA BUCKMASTER: Can you hear
23 me?

24 JUDGE TOREM: Yes. Now you're
25 coming through.

1 BARBARA BUCKMASTER: Good evening.
2 My name is Barbara Buckmaster. I've been a resident in
3 Benton County for 45 years. I own a 200-acre farm that
4 is right at the base of the Horse Heaven Hills where
5 this project's about to go. I thank you-all for
6 hearing my comments.

7 Since January 31st, hundreds and hundreds of our
8 community citizens have become aware of the proposed
9 wind and solar farm. Public comments should be for any
10 individual that wants their voice heard, not just the
11 ones who commented eight months ago.

12 I've spoken to hundreds of people in this
13 community. I have even gone door to door in the Badger
14 Canyon area to talk to residents. People are mad and
15 they're angered. They do not want our skyline to look
16 like an industrial site. The greater population of
17 this community does not want the entire ridgeline from
18 Benton City all the way to Finley populated with
19 monstrous wind turbines. We want the remaining
20 ridgelines of Horse Heaven Hills to be open and
21 preserved for our future generations to come.

22 The power generated from this project is planned
23 to be outsourced, with very little or no benefits to
24 the local residents. We already outsource power from
25 our nuclear and our hydro generating plants. I would

1 stand in favor if we really needed the power or that it
2 would strongly improve the quality of life in our
3 community. But this project won't do that. These wind
4 turbines will even hinder the fire control on the
5 ridges, and it could put people's lives and livelihood
6 at risk.

7 This project, in my opinion, is about greed led by
8 politics. I ask why we as a community have to
9 sacrifice what is left of our beautiful Horse Heaven
10 Hill ridges. Are you listening? Are you listening to
11 the people? Do you hear our heart? Let the people of
12 this community decide what's best for us. I encourage
13 you to send Governor Jay Inslee a recommendation to
14 hold off, or better yet, say "no." My voice is a
15 monstrous "no." Thank you very much.

16 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you,
17 Ms. Buckmaster.

18 Keith Brutzman.

19 KAREN BRUTZMAN: My husband, Keith,
20 is ill, and he submitted his comments opposing the
21 project in writing.

22 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Thank you,
23 ma'am, for letting me know.

24 Chris Wright.

25 After Chris Wright would be Greg Wagner. After

1 Greg Wagner would be Vince Shawver, followed by
2 Elizabeth Swanson.

3 Again, folks, if you're on "mute" -- we have a
4 number of phone calls that I can't see the names on. I
5 just see the "509" numbers. If you're on "mute" and
6 you need to be off "mute" to provide your comment, come
7 off on "*6" or perhaps "#6."

8 We're looking for Chris Wright, Greg Wagner, Vince
9 Shawver, and now Elizabeth Swanson.

10 Next would be Christina Caprio. She'd be followed
11 by Mike, is it Bosse or "Bosse"? "Bossé" maybe.
12 Jessica Wadsworth. And the last one on my list,
13 No. 33, is William or "Bill" McKay, the mayor of
14 Kennewick.

15 So back to Christina Caprio. Mike "Bossé" or
16 "Bosse."

17 MICHAEL (MIKE) L. BOSSE: I'm
18 present.

19 JUDGE TOREM: All right, sir. Floor
20 is yours.

21 MICHAEL (MIKE) L. BOSSE: Thank you.

22 I'm here today in support of the Horse Heaven
23 Clean Energy Center project and urge both the
24 adjudication review process and EFSEC final review to
25 be completed and approved as quickly a possible. This

1 project has been -- received an extremely thorough
2 30-month review and analysis of its impact, and the
3 review process is working. After listening to feedback
4 from public agencies, stakeholders, and community
5 members, Scout Clean Energy is incorporating design
6 changes that avoid and lessen potential impacts,
7 including significant reductions from the project's
8 original scope.

9 The jobs required by this project are high-paying
10 family-wage opportunities. Economic impact studies
11 examining the project estimated the typical income per
12 worker during the construction phase to be \$113,500.
13 That's nearly 60 percent higher than the average
14 regional compensation across industries and 37 percent
15 higher than the compensation in the construction
16 industry for Benton and Franklin Counties.

17 The studies also show that at full build-out, the
18 project could amount to a -- at least 73 million in
19 labor income and 143 million in total economic output.
20 Following construction, the project will also create a
21 combined direct, indirect, and induced total of 56
22 long -- long-term high-paying jobs during its estimated
23 30-year life span.

24 Bonneville Power Administration's new electrical
25 infrastructure upgrades in the Tri-Cities means that

1 the project will now be directly connected to the
2 electric grid in Benton and Franklin Counties. These
3 green electrons will serve this community no matter who
4 contracts to purchase the power. This is a basic truth
5 of how electricity flows. And when major transmission
6 lines from the Southwest U.S. are impacted by wildfires
7 just as they were in the summer of 2022 and '21, the
8 project's locally sourced electricity will make the
9 Tri-Cities and Washington State even more resilient
10 during our increasing extreme weather events.

11 Companies like Amazon, Darigold, and other key
12 manufacturers will increasingly seek green power to
13 help meet their carbon reduction commitments.

14 Meanwhile, new renewable projects will work in concert
15 with our hydropower system to create a more resilient
16 self-contained power generation system that can be less
17 re- -- reliant on electricity from the fire-ravaged
18 Southwest during the Northwest summer extreme heats.

19 Thank you for your time and consideration.

20 JUDGE TOREM: All right. I'm going
21 to next call Jessica Wadsworth.

22 For those of you that are on the phone that may
23 not be able to figure out how to unmute, one suggestion
24 might be to leave the meeting, hang up, and reconnect,
25 and then your mike will be live when you reconnect. So

1 if any of the people I've been calling have not been
2 unable to unmute -- I know that can be frustrating --
3 might try, as we get to the end of the meeting here, to
4 disconnect and reconnect, and I'll call those people
5 once again.

6 Is Jessica Wadsworth present?

7 JESSICA WADSWORTH: I am.

8 Thank you for this opportunity to speak tonight.
9 My name is Jessica Wadsworth, and I'm a resident of
10 Benton City and also a city council member.

11 As the State of Washington works to meet the
12 emissions carbon reduction goals established by the
13 Clean Energy Transformation Act, projects like Horse
14 Heaven Clean Energy Center are proving that climate
15 mitigation and economic growth are not mutually
16 exclusive. The project would generate a new source of
17 reliable carbon-free energy while creating significant
18 economic opportunities for Benton County, Franklin
19 County, and surrounding areas like Benton City.

20 According to extensive economic impact analysis,
21 the project will generate almost 20 million in revenue
22 during the first full year of operation and 260 million
23 over the 35-year operation life of the project. Under
24 current allocations, the largest portion of the funds
25 would support local schools and other important public

1 services, such as hiring of police officers.

2 Our local schools could benefit from the project,
3 additional tax revenue, and support the hiring of a
4 dozen educators by the school districts. These
5 additional hires can lower the class size and provide
6 more individual attention to each student. These
7 resources could also be used to provide classroom
8 settings of purchase critical learning technology.
9 This commercial tax-base funding can improve
10 educational outcomes for students.

11 Our communities have also struggled during
12 wildfire seasons. As time goes on, these seasons will
13 last longer and yield harsher wildfires. Where
14 firefighters are in charge with keeping people safe and
15 property safe, our local fire stations could benefit
16 from the potential hiring of projected 67 new
17 firefighters that have revenue raised from the
18 first year of the project could provide.

19 This project provides a significant opportunity to
20 revitalize our communities and help our children
21 thrive. At the same time, it will help our state
22 transition to clean-energy future. I hope you support
23 this project. Thank you.

24 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Before I
25 get to Mayor McKay, I want to go back through the list

1 of folks that I called but didn't answer previously.

2 We had Barbara Thompson, Richard Yrjanson. And if
3 you're here, speak up so I can give you a chance to
4 speak to the Council. Art Kelly, Patricia or "Pat"
5 Loera.

6 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: This is
7 Pat --

8 JUDGE TOREM: Joe --

9 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA -- Loera.

10 JUDGE TOREM: Hi, Ms. Loera.

11 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: Hi.

12 JUDGE TOREM: Let me give you your
13 time now.

14 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: Hi.

15 Okay. Thank you very much.

16 I have lived in Kennewick for 38 years, and I call
17 south Kennewick my home. I'm strongly opposed to this
18 massive and harmful wind farm project that threatens to
19 destroy our beautiful community. It is too large and
20 too close to too many people and their homes. Not only
21 will it ruin our views and the landscape; it will harm
22 local wildlife and destroy their natural habitat.

23 It'll negatively impact tourism, and it will
24 decrease the home values and the desirability for other
25 people to move to our community. In the wake of the

1 numerous wildfires occurring in our area this summer,
2 I'm also concerned that the giant turbines will
3 obstruct aerial firefighting capabilities.

4 Research and studies conducted by scientists and
5 experts have proven these points. We need renewable
6 energy sources, but the price the Tri-Cities is being
7 asked to pay for this is far too great for very minimal
8 benefit. The only winners in this will be Scout
9 Energy. I implore the City to please hear our pleas
10 and reject this unrealistic project that is right in my
11 backyard. Thank you.

12 JUDGE TOREM: Thank you, Ms. Loera.

13 Is Joe Loera available?

14 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: Yes.

15 JOE LOERA: Yes.

16 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: He is.

17 JOE LOERA: Yes.

18 PATRICIA (PAT) LOERA: (Indis-
19 cernible.)

20 JOE LOERA: I'm -- I'm right here.

21 JUDGE TOREM: All right. Then
22 you're next, sir.

23 JOE LOERA: I've been a resident of
24 Tri-Cities for over 35 years. And when my wife and I
25 arrived here in 1985, there wasn't much of a city to

1 look at. In fact, most people thought it was just a
2 good place to fuel up and keep going and just -- and
3 just pass us by.

4 Over the years, fortunately, my wife and I have
5 come to love this area: The rivers, the wineries, the
6 desert beauty. It's a gorgeous place to live. We live
7 in south Kennewick, as my wife mentioned earlier. We
8 oftentimes take walks across the hills. The sunsets
9 are incredible. The silence is amazing. It's
10 peaceful. It's a wonderful piece of -- of heaven for
11 us.

12 I'm all for green energy and saving the planet,
13 but I absolutely do not agree with putting a wind farm
14 near Tri-Cities. There's a lot of things that bother
15 me about this project, but most bothersome is what
16 seems to be the dishonesty of this company.

17 One of its claims is that jobs from the project
18 are going to benefit the Tri-Cities. They mention
19 hundreds of positions, when in reality there's only
20 going to be a few long-term. It makes me wonder what
21 else they're hiding, what else are they exaggerating,
22 what else are they not being completely transparent
23 about.

24 Please do not allow this project to move forward.
25 Thank you for your time.

1 JUDGE TOREM: All right. I'm glad I
2 found the Loeras.

3 Jerry Carlson.

4 All right. We had Jordan Ryckman or "Ryckman"
5 that wasn't able to speak up earlier.

6 All right. We have Karen Batishko, Chris Wright,
7 Greg Wagner, Vince Shawver, Elizabeth Swanson, and
8 Christina Caprio. And if I don't hear from any of them
9 here, then I'm going to come to Mayor McKay.

10 Bill McKay, mayor of the City of Kennewick, I hope
11 you're able to hear me.

12 All right. Maybe the mayor got called away to
13 other business and thought they were going to have time
14 tonight.

15 Those are all the people that were signed up
16 tonight. It's now 6:30. I appreciate hearing from all
17 of you. I know there are a lot of other options you
18 had for this evening, viewing pleasure or otherwise.
19 But I thank you for the time you put in so the Council
20 could hear some of the voices that had commented
21 previously as per what the law now requires, and we're
22 happy to consider all of those things as much as we
23 can.

24 I see that we have one of our attorneys, Shona
25 Voelckers, representing the Yakama Nation that wanted

1 to interject something here.

2 MS. VOELCKERS: Thank you, Your
3 Honor. I just -- I'm not sure exactly what's on your
4 screen, but I think there's something in the chat from
5 the mayor. So I just want to make sure that you were
6 able to see that before you move forward.

7 JUDGE TOREM: Yes. And I'll just
8 read the chat from Mayor Linda Lehman indicating -- she
9 had offered testimony during the adjudication earlier
10 and just making it clear that Ms. Wadsworth's testimony
11 might be her own personal, but she's not speaking on
12 behalf of the Benton City Council or the mayor.

13 So I know that many of you in the community have
14 one view and others have another. I appreciate Mayor
15 Lehman letting us know, as far as the official views,
16 how things go. But tonight's for public comment.
17 Those that are indicating they're speaking on behalf of
18 another group have done so.

19 The Council's heard what you've said. Our court
20 reporter to my right is taking it all down. It'll be
21 there for review. And, thanks to TVW, it's going to
22 have a little bit wider viewing as well.

23 Thank you, all, for the time tonight. It's 6:31.
24 I'm going to go ahead and adjourn the public comment
25 hearing.

1 Tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., we'll reconvene the
2 last two days, Day 7 tomorrow, on some environmental
3 physical impacts. And for those of you concerned with
4 visual impacts of the project, that will be most of the
5 topic tomorrow. And we'll be back on Friday to wrap up
6 with some other environmental impacts and other
7 physical impacts.

8 You can find the information of how to tune in, if
9 you don't have it already, on the EFSEC website. If
10 you don't have time during the workday tomorrow, those
11 videos are posted fairly quickly by staff.

12 Thanks for your interest. Have a good night.

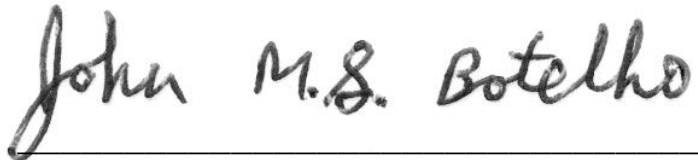
13 (Proceedings adjourned at
14 6:31 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF WASHINGTON) I, John M.S. Botelho, CCR, RPR,
2) ss a certified court reporter
3 County of Pierce) in the State of Washington, do
4 hereby certify:

5 That the foregoing proceedings were taken in my
6 presence and were adjourned on August 23, 2023, and
7 thereafter were transcribed under my direction; that the
8 transcript is a full, true and complete transcript of the
9 said proceedings and was transcribed to the best of my
10 ability;

11 That I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel
12 of any party to this action or relative or employee of any
13 such attorney or counsel and that I am not financially
14 interested in the said action or the outcome thereof;

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
16 this 11th day of September, 2023.

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John M.S. Botelho, CCR, RPR
Certified Court Reporter No. 2976
(Certification expires 5/26/2024.)

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