

# Transmission Corridors Work Group (TCWG)

Final

1.3.2022

## Purpose and Legislative Charge

With the Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA) of 2019, Washington set a course to rapidly “decarbonize” its economy by transitioning away from fossil-fuel generated energy sources to renewable and non-emitting<sup>3</sup> energy sources. The Washington State Legislature, in this enabling legislation stated, “based on current technology, there will likely need to be upgrades to electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure across the state to meet the goals specified in this act. These facilities require a significant planning horizon to deliver electricity generation sites to retail electric load.” Through this Act, the Legislature directed the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) chair Kathleen Drew to convene a Transmission Corridors Work Group (TCWG) with the following responsibilities (see Appendix 1 for full text):

1. Review the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities<sup>12</sup> to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capability of the transmission and distribution facilities in the state to deliver electricity from electric generation, non-emitting electric generation<sup>3</sup> or renewable resources to retail electric load;
2. Identify areas where transmission and distribution facilities may need to be enhanced or constructed;
3. Identify environmental review options that may be required to complete the designation of such corridors and recommend ways to expedite review of transmission projects without compromising required environmental protection; and
4. Report its findings to the governor and legislative committees by Dec. 31, 2022.

## Approach and Scope

The Washington State Legislature in its charge describes the anticipated outcomes of the work of TCWG. This section describes how the TCWG will complete its anticipated outputs.

### **Outcome #1: Review the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution**

**facilities.** To accomplish this, the TCWG will, in Meetings #1 and #2, work to get a baseline understanding of the state of transmission and the transmission siting process in Washington, receive a briefing on the relevant portions of the Washington state energy strategy, and learn about other

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<sup>1</sup> This charter assumes that scope of the discussions is limited to transmission lines and facilities (> 69kV transmitting over long distances to load) and distribution lines and facilities (> 69kV transmitting short distances to load) within the State of Washington, but with the understanding that many in-state transmission facilities are extensions of out-of-state facilities.

<sup>2</sup> Definition for transmission facilities is consistent with that used for bulk generation facilities by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation ([NERC](#)).

<sup>3</sup> 28)(a) "Non-emitting electric generation" means electricity from a generating facility or a resource that provides electric energy, capacity, or ancillary services to an electric utility and that does not emit greenhouse gases as a by-product of energy generation. (b) "Non-emitting electric generation" does not include renewable resources.

relevant energy needs and opportunities identified by the TCWG members. The workgroup facilitation team will summarize this baseline knowledge which will be included in the final TCWG report.

Using this baseline knowledge, the TCWG will discuss potential transmission gaps to support future energy strategies, the location of resources vs. loads, and important attributes to consider (e.g., east-side vs. west-side, backlog of interconnection requests). The TCWG will use the timeframes outlined in CETA when referencing energy vision or upgrades. These discussions will be summarized in the final TCWG report to satisfy the TCWG's charge of reviewing the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities.

**Outcome #2: Identify areas where transmission and distribution facilities may need to be enhanced or constructed.** To accomplish this the TCWG will, in Meetings #3- #5, work from the needs and opportunities identified in outcome #1 and identify specific implications for transmission upgrades with an initial focus on existing transmission corridors. The upgrades the TCWG will consider include (but aren't limited to): transmission to enable new in-state generation to connect to the main grid; transmission of renewable and non-emitting power to load centers; improvements of transmission system in Interstate 5 corridor (N-S); transmission needs for import/export of power into/out of state; transmission to support offshore wind power generation; and new transmission line corridors. As the TCWG discusses upgrades, the contracting team will document at a regional level the location/geographic implications, how upgrades address anticipated needs, implications for tribal consultation, timing, and resource considerations<sup>4</sup> for the final report.

**Outcome #3: Identify environmental review<sup>5</sup> options and recommendations on ways to expedite reviews.** To support this effort, the facilitation team will in advance of Meeting #4 compile known and proposed environmental review options along known permitting pathways, including SEPA<sup>6</sup>, NEPA, and local permitting. The discussion for the TCWG can then focus on, for each environmental review option, identifying and describing challenges, key considerations, tradeoffs should the desired transmission facility trigger the environmental review option, implications for cultural review, and how to expedite environmental reviews. The environmental review options and corresponding discussion from the TCWG will be included in the final report.

**Outcome #4: Report and Report Development.** The facilitation team will draft sections of the findings from the TCWG review. As described above, the content of the report will come directly from the materials presented to the TCWG during the meetings and from summarized conversations of the TCWG. The report will capture the group areas of agreement as well as note areas of disagreement. The facilitation team will draft sections of the group's findings throughout the process and the TCWG will have the opportunity to provide comments during the drafting process. The TCWG chair will make final decisions regarding content of the report.

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<sup>4</sup> The TCWG will perform cost analysis as it explores potential upgrades. If, however, there is information about resources the TCWG feels is important to convey it will be documented in the final report.

<sup>5</sup> "Environmental" review, as specified by SEPA and NEPA includes review of cultural, archaeological, avian, socioeconomic, and many other project aspects.

<sup>6</sup> The TCWG will coordinate with the WA Department of Ecology on SEPA-related topics.

## TCWG Operations

- Participation during meetings, including breakout groups, will be limited to TCWG members, experts/guests invited to present to the TCWG, and TCWG member alternates.
- This charter assumes that TCWG members are representing the perspective of their agencies during TCWG deliberations.
- Meeting summaries in general will not attribute comments unless there is explicit direction from a TCWG member.
- TCWG members should come prepared to participate in deliberations. Meeting materials will be available no later than one week prior to the TCWG meeting, and TCWG members are expected to review materials prior to each meeting.
- TCWG members may be asked to work with one another between TCWG meetings.
- TCWG will not have a quorum or consensus requirement. TCWG will not be voting or making formal decisions, so a quorum requirement is not needed.
- TCWG members are expected to listen to others, focus on issues (not personalities), and assume positive intent.
- TCWG members should avoid talking specifically about active (in process) energy siting projects to avoid potential conflicts of interest issues.
- The facilitation team (Ross Strategic) is a neutral party responsible for running productive and constructive meetings consistent with the ground rules and charter, and for documenting the work group process and outcomes through meeting summaries and the final report.

## Role of the TCWG Chair

- The TCWG Chair is the process owner and is responsible for establishing the meeting agendas and convening the meetings.
- The TCWG chair will determine the format (in-person vs. virtual) of the TCWG meetings.
- The TCWG chair will make final decisions regarding content of the final report.

## Attendance and Alternates

- Meetings will be virtual until gatherings are deemed safe and prudent per Washington state health authorities. If it is deemed safe per Washington state health authorities, TCWG members are encouraged to attend all meetings in person. If attendance in person is not practical, other methods of participation (video or teleconference) will be made available.
- TCWG members are asked to select an alternate for the duration of the process to participate in meetings on an as needed basis in the event a TCWG member is unable to attend. TCWG members are requested to inform the TCWG chair via email at least one week prior to a meeting at which their alternate will attend.
- An alternate will assume the full responsibility of the TCWG member they are representing. The TCWG member is expected to prepare the alternate to fully participate during the meeting. Alternatives will receive all meeting invites, meeting materials, and communications that TCWG members receive.
- If a TCWG member and alternate are both unable to attend, the TCWG member can provide written comments on the material covered during the missed meeting to the TCWG Chair prior to the next meeting.
- If a TCWG member is no longer able to serve on the TCWG, the TCWG Chair has the responsibility to determine whether a replacement is necessary and, if so, to identify a replacement TCWG member.

## Transparency and Documentation

- TCWG meetings will be documented in the form of meeting summary. The meeting summary, meeting materials (e.g., presentations, handouts), and photographs of relevant outputs of meeting deliberations (e.g., flip charts/sticky notes) will be posted to the TCWG public website.
- TCWG meetings are open public meetings; the public is welcome to attend and there will a 15-minute opportunity for public testimony at end of each meeting.
- Public comments in between meetings can emailed to: [transmissioncorridors@rossstrategic.com](mailto:transmissioncorridors@rossstrategic.com)
- Meeting materials and summaries will be available on the TCWG website (<https://www.efsec.wa.gov/energy-facilities/transmission-corridors-work-group>) following each meeting. The final report will also be posted to the TCWG website upon completion and submittal to the Governor’s Office.

## Membership

The legislative charge identified specific membership requirements. See Appendix 2 for the full table of TCWG members and their alternatives.

## Meeting Schedule

Meeting #1	September 22, 2021
Meeting #2	October 20, 2021
Meeting #3	December 8-9, 2021
Meeting #4	February 9-10, 2022
Meeting #5	April 13-14, 2022
Meeting #6	June 8-9, 2022

## Appendix 1: Full Text of Section 25 (enabling legislation)

- (1) The legislature finds that based on current technology, there will likely need to be upgrades to electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure across the state to meet the goals specified in this act. These facilities require a significant planning horizon to deliver electricity generation sites to retail electric load. Pursuant to RCW 80.50.040,29 the energy facility site evaluation council chair shall convene a transmission corridors work group and report its findings to the governor and the appropriate committees of the legislature by December 31, 2022.
- (2) The work group must include one representative from each of the following state agencies: The department of commerce, the utilities and transportation commission, the department of ecology, the department of fish and wildlife, the department of natural resources, the department of transportation, the department of archaeology and historic preservation, and the state military department. The work group shall also include two representatives designated by the association of Washington cities, one from central or eastern Washington and one from western Washington; two representatives designated by the Washington state association of counties, one from central or eastern Washington and one from western Washington; two members designated by sovereign tribal governments; one member representing affected utility industries; one member representing public utility districts; and two members representing statewide environmental organizations. The energy facility site evaluation council chair shall invite the Bonneville power administration and the United States department of defense to each appoint an ex officio work group member.
- (3) The work group shall:
  - a. Review the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capability of the transmission and distribution facilities in the state to deliver electricity from electric generation, non-emitting electric generation, or renewable resources to retail electric load;
  - b. Identify areas where transmission and distribution facilities may need to be enhanced or constructed; and
  - c. Identify environmental review options that may be required to complete the designation of such corridors and recommend ways to expedite review of transmission projects without compromising required environmental protection.
- (4) The energy facility site evaluation council may contract services to assist in the work group efforts.
- (5) This section expires January 1, 2023.

## Appendix 2: Membership

Member org.	Org. type	Designated member(s)	Alternate
Dept. of Commerce	State agency	Glenn Blackmon	Michael Furze
UTC	State agency	Elizabeth O'Connell	Mark Vasconi
Dept. of Ecology	State agency	Brendon McFarland	Diane Butorac
DFW	State agency	Benjamin Blank	Michael Garrity
DNR	State agency	Loren Torgerson	George Geissler
WSDOT	State agency	Ahmer Nizam	Justin Zweifel
Dept. of Arch. & Historic Pres.	State agency	Allyson Brooks	TBD
Military Dept.	State agency	Bernard (Rick) Jackson	Alan Dorow
AWC – Assoc. of WA Cities (2)	Association	Julie Coppock Clint Whitney	Brandy DeLange
WSAC – WA State Assoc. of Counties (2)	Association	Kevin Shutt Lindsey Pollock	Paul Jewell Paul Jewell
Public utility districts (PUDs)	Separate; have assoc.	Nicolas Garcia	Ian Hunter
Sovereign tribal governments (2)	Yakama Tribe Snoqualmie Tribe	Dana Miller Steven Mullen-Moses	Jeremy Takala Anthony Aronica
Affected utility industries (IOU)	PacifiCorp, PSE, Avista	Lorna Luebbe (PSE)	TBD
Statewide env. orgs. (2)	Climate Solutions Columbia Riverkeepers/Front & Centered	Erin Saylor	Kelly Hall Mariel Thuraisingham
BPA - Bonneville Power Admin.	Federal entity	Anders Johnson	Ravi Aggarwal
US Dept. of Defense	Federal entity	Steve Chung	Kim Peacher
Energy Project Developer	Avangrid/Renewable NW	Anders Bisgard	Katie Ware
Labor and Building/Trades	IBEW 77/WA State Building & Construction Trades Council	Will Power	Mark Riker