

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE
Governor



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September 18, 2007

Jim Luce, Chair
Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
PO Box 43172
Olympia, WA 98502-3172

RE: Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project
EFSEC Recommendation Letter Dated August 14, 2007

Dear Mr.  Luce:

I wish to express my thanks to you and the other members of Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) for a timely response to my remand of the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project (Project). I am approving the project.

It is clear that Washington is growing and with that growth our demands for energy resources also increase. It is the clear and compelling policy of the state to prefer new resources that have the least impact on our state's natural environment. Our legislators and our citizens have recently articulated their strong preferences for renewable resources. Those policies are not in doubt and I remain committed to them. To fulfill them, we will have to build infrastructure that broadly benefits our citizens, and may impose burdens on some.

The benefits of this Project are considerable and will accrue to the citizens across our state. The Project will generate renewable energy sufficient to supply power to tens of thousands of homes, by feeding power to the grid that supplies our electricity needs. It will also provide permanent and temporary jobs, millions of dollars of investment and other economic benefits, and increased valuation of the county's real property to support state and local schools and other local purpose districts. Further, these benefits are being secured without contributing to climate change. Projects like these are consistent with Washington's long-standing commitment to clean energy, as expressed by the Legislature and recently by a majority of the state's citizens through I-937.

In this case, the burdens from the Project fall predominantly on a very small number of local landowners who are not participating in it. My remand was an attempt to ensure that mitigation for those affected landowners was looked at again and not to extend EFSEC beyond its statutory authority and into the financial terms of the project. As the Economic Development Council representative to this proceeding put it in the hearing on the issue "Can you have further setbacks and still have the project?" I am satisfied EFSEC has looked thoroughly at this issue and the new requirements for maximizing setback rather than power production, along with the numerous other mitigation conditions, are adequate.



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I have given careful consideration to this decision and do not exercise my authority lightly. As Governor, I have seen the federal government take and exercise authority that I would have preferred to keep in the state's control, and so I know precisely how local government perceives it when the state does the same thing. Nonetheless, the Legislature has given the Governor the authority to act to ensure that all citizens of the state continue to have access to abundant, affordable and environmentally-preferred power. I find the underlying policy rationale and the benefits compelling in my decision to move forward.

I wish to thank those citizens, particularly those residents of Kittitas County, who took the time and effort to participate in the extensive public process at EFSEC and before the County on this project. The sentiments expressed in their letters and testimony are well-reasoned, well argued, and in the vast majority, respectful of those who hold different views. The record is replete with almost every conceivable position on the project from within the County, and if this decision does not reflect the preferred outcome for some, I assure everyone that their voice was heard and their views considered.

I remain mindful of the cumulative impacts of wind power projects in Kittitas County. I note that the only wind projects that have sought EFSEC approval have been in Kittitas County. For those reasons I commend the Kittitas County Commissioners for recent efforts to pre-identify areas for future development. Other Washington counties have used a similar planning mechanism successfully.

Therefore, I am approving the Project. I am signing the Site Certification Agreement as amended by Order #831, pursuant to applicable state law.

Sincerely,



Christine O. Gregoire
Governor