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WASHINGTON STATE

ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL

CASCADE TRANSMISSION PROJECT

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

November 17, 2025

Washougal, Washington

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

1 APPEARANCES

2 STATE AGENCY MEMBERS:

3 Kurt Beckett, Chair

4 Elizabeth Osborne, Department of Commerce

5 Blake Nelson, Department of Ecology

6 Nate Pamplin, Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

7 Maverick Ryan, Department of Natural Resources

8 Brian Rybarik,
9 Utilities & Transportation Commission

10
11 ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL:

12 Jon Thompson

13
14 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:

15 Courtney Beebe

16
17 COUNCIL STAFF:

18 Sonia Bumpus

Alex Shiley

19 Ami Hafkemeyer

Karl Holappa

20 Joan Owens

Maria Belkina

21 Andrea Grantham

Lisa McLean

22 Lance Caputo

1 APPEARANCES (Continuing)

2 IN ATTENDANCE:

3 For Cascade Renewable Transmission, LLC:

4 Chris Hocker

5 Susan Brown

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1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on Monday,
2 November 17, 2025, at 56 South First Street,
3 Washougal, Washington, at 5:31 p.m., the following
4 public informational meeting of the Washington State
5 Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council was held, to
6 wit:

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

9
10 CHAIR BECKETT: Good evening. My
11 name is Kurt Beckett. I'm chair of the Energy
12 Facility Site Evaluation Council. Want to welcome
13 you-all who have taken your time to join us this
14 evening. Appreciate your participation in being
15 here. Certainly welcome and appreciate others who
16 are online with us tonight as well.

17 And let me just explain a couple things about our
18 meeting as we call this order, and then we'll proceed
19 with the roll call of our Council and then on to the
20 agenda.

21 So this is the first of two meetings tonight.
22 We're beginning the evening with the formal public
23 informational meeting. And this is required by State
24 law, RCW 80.50.090(1) and Washington Administrative
25 Code 463-26-025. There will be no quiz on those

1 citations, but we read it for clarity of the record.

2 EFSEC staff and applicant will introduce
3 themselves as well as the counsel for the
4 environment. Let me also note that we have Judge
5 Courtney Beebe, who will be joining us online tonight
6 for our land-use hearing in particular, who is
7 participating from the Office of Administrative
8 Hearings. The administrative law judge role, which
9 she'll explain further, is to help ensure we have a
10 proper record for the land-use adjudication and
11 consideration.

12 The counsel for the environment is an assistant
13 attorney general appointed by the Washington attorney
14 general, who will explain the duties of this position
15 shortly.

16 Also we will have brief introductions from any
17 counsel as our staff and then presentations from both
18 the EFSEC staff on our process and the applicant on
19 their proposed project.

20 Following introductions and those presentations,
21 we will certainly welcome public comment. And the
22 second meeting, which, again, will begin tonight
23 after the first comment period is closed, and we
24 expect that will be approximately at least by 7:00,
25 perhaps a little sooner, but it will immediately

1 follow the first public participation and public
2 comment.

3 So with that, I would ask that we call the roll.

4 MS. GRANTHAM: Certainly, Chair.

5 Department of commerce.

6 MS. OSBORNE: Elizabeth Osborne,
7 present online. Good evening.

8 MS. GRANTHAM: Okay. I can hear
9 her in the headset.

10 Go ahead one more time, Ms. Osborne.

11 MS. OSBORNE: Hello. Elizabeth
12 Osborne, present.

13 Can you hear me?

14 MS. GRANTHAM: Thank you so much.

15 MS. OSBORNE: Okay.

16 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes.

17 CHAIR BECKETT: We can.

18 MS. OSBORNE: Great. Thanks.

19 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of
20 Ecology.

21 MR. NELSON: Blake Nelson,
22 Department of Ecology, present.

23 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of Fish
24 and Wildlife.

25 MR. PAMPLIN: Nate Pamplin, Fish

1 and Wildlife.

2 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of
3 Natural Resources.

4 MR. RYAN: Maverick Ryan, DNR.

5 MS. GRANTHAM: Utilities and
6 Transportation Commission.

7 MR. RYBARIK: Brian Rybarik from
8 the UTC, present.

9 MS. GRANTHAM: Assistant Attorney
10 General Jon Thompson.

11 MR. THOMPSON: I am present.

12 MS. GRANTHAM: Administrative Law
13 Judge Courtney Beebe.

14 JUDGE BEEBE: I am present.

15 MS. GRANTHAM: And then I will call
16 staff anticipated to speak.

17 Sonia Bumpus.

18 MS. BUMPUS: Present.

19 MS. GRANTHAM: Ami Hafkemeyer.

20 MS. HAFKEMEYER: Present.

21 MS. GRANTHAM: Maria Belkina.

22 MS. BELKINA: Present.

23 MS. GRANTHAM: Lance Caputo.

24 MR. CAPUTO: Present.

25 MS. GRANTHAM: Lisa McLean.

1 MS. McLEAN: Present.

2 MS. GRANTHAM: And Karl Holappa.

3 MR. HOLAPPA: Present.

4 MS. GRANTHAM: And do we have
5 anyone present for the counsel for the environment?

6 Chair, there is a quorum for the Council.

7 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you,
8 Ms. Grantham.

9 I expect that Council probably feels we've done
10 our introductions with staff, but let me just
11 double-check if there are any other opening words of
12 introduction from Sonia Bumpus or others.

13 MS. BUMPUS: No comments.

14 CHAIR BECKETT: All right. And
15 just in lieu of counsel for the environment, which
16 generally is always here -- and I think if Jon
17 Thompson, our counsel online, wanted to just give a
18 brief word on their behalf -- ultimately they are
19 here to be an advocate for the environment but for
20 the people of Washington and the environment.

21 So Counsel Thompson, any other quick word you
22 wanted to note about that role since I stated that we
23 would explain it?

24 MR. THOMPSON: Yes. Generally
25 there's a statutory rule for a assistant attorney

1 general to serve in the role of counsel for the
2 environment and generally to represent the interests
3 of the environment in the adjudicative hearing before
4 the Council. I believe the attorney general has
5 appointed Yuriy Korol for the role in this case.
6 And, yeah, that's about it.

7 CHAIR BECKETT: Very well. Thank
8 you.

9 So with that, let me exercise a little
10 prerogative as the chair, which is I will hold on our
11 further introductions from the Cascade Renewable
12 Transmission Project just so that perhaps we can do
13 that in a more fulsome way when you come up to make
14 your presentation.

15 So, with that, I would ask the EFSEC staff to
16 give the siting process overview presentation.

17 MS. BELKINA: Okay. It doesn't
18 work. Excuse me.

19 Can you help me? It's clicking?

20 CHAIR BECKETT: There you go.

21 MS. BELKINA: Welcome, everybody.
22 Thank you, all, for coming to participate this
23 evening. My name is Maria Belkina. I am siting
24 specialist for EFSEC, and I will be -- I will be
25 giving a short presentation on the EFSEC process for

1 those who are unfamiliar with our agency.

2 A little bit on the history of the EFSEC agency.
3 EFSEC was created in 1970 for the siting of thermal
4 power plants. The intent was to create a one-stop
5 permitting agency for large energy facilities. EFSEC
6 is comprised of the state and local government
7 members who review each application before voting
8 through to make a Council recommendation to the
9 governor.

10 If recommending approval, the package to the
11 governor includes a draft site certification
12 agreement, or SCA, which defines all preconstruction,
13 construction, and operation plans. If approved by
14 the governor's office, the decision preempts other
15 state or local regulations.

16 EFSEC is comprised of members from several
17 different state-level agencies. The chairperson is
18 appointed by the governor. And there are standing
19 members from the five other agencies appointed by
20 those agencies to sit on the Council.

21 The current Council is made up of Chair Kurt
22 Beckett, Blake Nelson from the Department of Ecology,
23 Nate Pamplin from the Department of Fish and
24 Wildlife, Elizabeth Osborne from the Department of
25 Commerce, Maverick Ryan from the Department of

1 Natural Resources, and Brian Rybarik from the
2 Utilities and Transportation Commission.

3 There are additional agencies that may elect to
4 appoint a Council member during the review of a new
5 application. These agencies are the Department of
6 Agriculture, the Department of Transportation, the
7 Department of Health, and the Military Department.
8 The local county shall also appoint a Council member
9 for the review of a new application. If a proposal
10 project is located at a port, the port may appoint a
11 nonvoting member.

12 MS. BUMPUS: It skipped a few
13 slides.

14 MS. BELKINA: Oh. The facilities.

15 MS. BUMPUS: Yeah, next one.

16 MS. BELKINA: Oh.

17 MS. BUMPUS: There we go. That's
18 it.

19 MS. BELKINA: There we go.

20 Multiple energy generation facilities fall under
21 EFSEC's jurisdiction. Some projects, such as thermal
22 power plants greater than 350 megawatts and nuclear
23 generation for the purpose of generating electricity,
24 are required to be sited through EFSEC, while
25 others -- such as wind, solar, green hydrogen,

1 storage, or clean energy manufacturing -- can opt in
2 at any size.

3 Transmission lines greater than 115 kilovolts can
4 also opt in while lines greater than 500 kilovolts
5 alternating current or 300 kilovolts direct current
6 are required. Thresholds for pipelines and
7 refineries that may be sited through EFSEC are found
8 in the Revised Code of Washington, or RCW, 80.50.060.

9 Here is a map of the facilities that are
10 certified or have applied for certification under
11 EFSEC's jurisdiction. You can see marked in green,
12 there are six separating facilities, including two
13 natural gas facilities, one nuclear facility, one
14 solar facility, and two wind facilities.

15 The blue marks indicate the four additional
16 facilities that are approved but are not yet
17 constructed.

18 The clear circle is the one facility in the
19 process of decommissioning. EFSEC is currently
20 reviewing seven projects marked by yellow, including
21 the Cascade Renewable Transmission Project which
22 brings us here this evening.

23 Here is a flowchart showing the general process
24 an applicant will go through when they submit an
25 application to EFSEC. There are green arrows on the

1 chart that indicate specific milestones in the
2 process where the Council and staff seek public
3 input.

4 You can see that there are multiple processes
5 that happen concurrently when EFSEC is reviewing an
6 application. The permitting process, outlined across
7 the top row, involves identifying and preparing
8 applicable environmental permits. The land-use and
9 adjudicative process runs through the middle. And
10 the State Environmental Policy Act, or SEPA, process
11 is shown along the bottom. All these processes
12 ultimately feed into the Council's recommendation
13 made to the governor.

14 Where an adjudication is required following the
15 land-use consistency hearing, an order is issued to
16 commence proceedings and initiate intervention.
17 Here, members of the public wishing to participate in
18 the adjudication must identify themselves and their
19 issues in writing. There are prehearing conferences
20 through which parties are granted an intervention
21 status and issues are identified. Exhibits and
22 testimony are provided, and cross-examination is
23 conducted.

24 After this, the Council looks at all information
25 in the adjudication record and deliberates. Finally,

1 the Council develops an order establishing their
2 findings in fact and conclusions of law from the
3 information provided throughout these proceedings.

4 For every project proposed, a SEPA review is
5 performed. When a determination of significance and
6 decision to prepare an environmental impact
7 statement -- or EIS -- is made, public comments are
8 taken on the scope of the EIS. After public comment
9 for the scoping, the SEPA responsible official
10 determines the scope of the EIS. A draft EIS is
11 prepared and issued with a minimum 30-day public
12 comment period after which the final EIS is prepared
13 and released.

14 In some instances, a determination of
15 nonsignificance, a DNS, or a mitigated determination
16 of nonsignificance is issued. If the SEPA
17 responsible official determines that a project meets
18 the criteria of a DNS or MDNS, an EIS is not
19 required. In this process, the determination is
20 noticed to the public and there is a minimum 15-day
21 public comment period on an MDNS while a DNS requires
22 no comment period.

23 Following the conclusion of these separate
24 avenues of application review, the Council develops
25 its recommendation to the governor, tying together

1 the information brought forth throughout the
2 application review process. If a project is issued
3 an MDNS and received a determination of land-use
4 consistency, it may qualify for expedited process.

5 To be considered for expedited processing, an
6 applicant must make the request in writing. If the
7 project meets the two aforementioned criteria of
8 land-use consistency and an MDNS, the Council can
9 grant expedited process review.

10 In this expedited process, the adjudication step
11 is not required, and an EIS is not prepared.
12 Applications granted expedited processing do hold an
13 additional public meeting prior to the Council's
14 recommendation to hear any conditions that may be
15 considered to impose on the project, consistent with
16 the conditional use process heading. The Council
17 prepares their recommendation to the governor in an
18 expedited time frame under this process.

19 Permit issuance. EFSEC is also the issuing
20 agency for any applicable state and local
21 environmental permits a facility may require,
22 including water quality and air quality permits as
23 they may apply. The permits are identified in the
24 final package with the Council's recommendation to
25 the governor.

1 If an application is approved by the governor,
2 EFSEC then has oversight of the environmental
3 compliance for the life of the facility through
4 decommissioning. EFSEC has standing contracts with
5 applicable state agencies that assist in the
6 monitoring and enforcement of conditions either in
7 the site certification agreement, identified permits,
8 or EIS or MDNS. EFSEC's enforcement authority
9 extends to the issuance of any penalties as they may
10 apply.

11 At the conclusion of the Council review of an
12 application, a recommendation is made to the governor
13 to either approve or reject the application. This
14 initiates a 60-day window within which the governor
15 will then either approve the application, reject the
16 application, or remand the application back to the
17 Council for consideration. Any application that is
18 rejected by the governor is a final decision for that
19 application.

20 As previously mentioned, EFSEC oversees
21 facilities under its jurisdiction through
22 decommissioning. Prior to the start of construction
23 of approved projects, an initial site restoration
24 plan is required. Then at the end of the life of the
25 facility prior to the start of decommissioning, a

1 detailed site restoration plan is required.

2 These plans must be reviewed and approved by the
3 Council. The project must also provide financial
4 assurance for the decommissioning in the event that
5 the project is no longer able to complete this
6 process. Assuming the project decommissions while
7 still under full control of the developer, those
8 costs will be paid by the certificate holder
9 directly.

10 And thank you for joining us this evening. EFSEC
11 appreciates your time and interest in the Cascade
12 Renewable Transmission Project. And our work is
13 closely coordinated with the Oregon Department of
14 Energy and the Army Corps of Engineers, ensuring that
15 both states and federal agencies are aligned in the
16 environmental and permitting review.

17 And also there's here, like, some representative
18 from Oregon Department of Ecology, Chris --
19 Christopher Clark. If you have any questions, I
20 think you can reach him out, yeah.

21 That wraps up my presentation this evening.
22 Before I end, I'd like to remind everyone how they
23 may submit comments to this proposal.

24 You may send written comments by e-mail to
25 comments@efsec.wa.gov; by postal mail to our office

1 listed here, at 621 Woodland Square Loop, PO Box
2 43172, Olympia, Washington 98504-3172; or by phone at
3 (360) 664-1345.

4 When EFSEC is in active comment period associated
5 with specific milestones, comments may also be
6 submitted to our online comment database at
7 <https://comments.efesc.wa.gov>. All comments
8 received, regardless of timing or method of delivery,
9 will be saved with the project record and available
10 to Council and staff for review.

11 I think that's it from EFSEC. With that, I would
12 like to turn the microphone over to the applicant
13 team from Cascade Renewable Transmission, who will
14 introduce --

15 CHAIR BECKETT: Appreciate that.
16 Did you have one other word, Director Bumpus? Okay
17 if not.

18 MS. BUMPUS: Thank you, Chair
19 Beckett. This is Sonia Bumpus.

20 I just wanted to point out that, in addition to
21 the ways that we talk about submitting comments on
22 the slide that you just saw, that information's also
23 with our speaker sign-up sheet there in the back of
24 the room.

25 So if you didn't get that information down during

1 the presentation, you can check with our staff in the
2 back of the room there. Thank you.

3 CHAIR BECKETT: Appreciate that.

4 And both tonight as has been noted and also in
5 general, well, we try to focus public comments around
6 particular comment periods of course. Ultimately,
7 you are able to submit comments to EFSEC at any
8 point. To help ensure that they're part of the
9 record, we encourage those comments during the active
10 recruitment of public comments in each of our
11 periods. So please just know that as we go forward
12 in this project in general.

13 And, with that, as was beginning, if we could
14 have our representatives from Cascade Renewable
15 Transmission to come forward to make their
16 presentation. And welcome you certainly introducing
17 your team as a whole in addition to those who will be
18 making formal comments. So thank you.

19 Thank you. And welcome. Sorry to have not been
20 more observant of you sitting to my left the whole
21 time. So I was looking out at the audience
22 evidently.

23 MR. HOCKER: I wasn't sure where
24 you wanted us.

25 CHAIR BECKETT: Welcome. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. HOCKER: Is this all working
3 well?

4 CHAIR BECKETT: Yes.

5 MR. HOCKER: Okay. Good.

6 Good evening. My name is Chris Hocker.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear.

8 CHAIR BECKETT: If you hold it a
9 little closer.

10 MR. HOCKER: Is that better?

11 Keep going. Little better.

12 Chris Hocker. I'm with the Cascade Transmission
13 Project. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and members of the
14 Council who are with us either virtually or here,
15 members of the staff, and particularly you-all for
16 coming out.

17 We do have a small team with us tonight. To my
18 left is Susan Brown. And we have several other folks
19 who are involved in project development who would be
20 happy to answer questions after the event. Hopefully
21 you've had a chance to talk to some of them already.

22 The project -- and I will try to present it
23 briefly, but it's -- it's unique. It's innovative.
24 Its purpose is to help Washington and Oregon achieve,
25 at least partially, their clean energy goals and to

1 try to lift some of the very serious constraints on
2 the regional transmission system.

3 I also need to acknowledge that we're well aware
4 that this whole area is the ancestral home of
5 indigenous peoples, and so we have been trying to
6 reach out and have productive engagement with the
7 tribes as we go forward.

8 So, again, I'll try to be brief. But just to
9 start out, what we're talking about here is about a
10 hundred-mile high-voltage transmission line of which
11 a little more than 80 miles will be under the bed of
12 the Columbia River and about 19 miles will be buried
13 underground.

14 As we'll see, doing it that way avoids a lot of
15 the negative impacts that are associated with major
16 overhead transmission lines. We expect that it will
17 be built over about a 36- to 42-month period. The
18 in-river installation would only occur during the
19 winter months to avoid impacts on fisheries.

20 And should point out that transmission of this
21 type is not unusual. It's unusual in this particular
22 part of the world. But, in fact, there are many
23 underwater transmission lines, including two that the
24 company that we're with had built and operated, the
25 oldest one since 2005, so it's been operating well

1 for about 20 years.

2 Let's go to the next.

3 So, briefly, the situation is that both
4 Washington and Oregon passed laws mandating the
5 achievement of clean energy goals by certain dates
6 certain. What is missing is sufficient transmission
7 to bring that renewable energy or, frankly, any
8 energy from the Cas- -- east of the Cascades over to
9 where the major load centers are on the west.

10 Next.

11 So a lot of this is due to a number of factors.
12 Fossil fuel generation is being or has been retired.
13 The transmission capacity that's already in existence
14 to go from east of the Cascades to the load centers
15 in the west is already pretty much at its capacity.
16 New overhead wires and towers are very difficult to
17 permit. And so we have this bottleneck that has been
18 created and is growing almost literally by the day.

19 Now, this next slide is confusing. And I
20 acknowledge it's not an easy one to follow. But it's
21 trying to answer the question, What's in it for
22 Washington? Because we think of, you know, the load
23 center potentially being in the greater Portland
24 area. Of course, that does include Vancouver, Clark
25 County.

1 But this slide indicates that the major flows --
2 these are those blue arrow semicircle things -- come
3 primarily from generation east of the Cascades and
4 flow through existing transmission until it gets west
5 to the load centers.

6 And then you can see sort of a north-south path,
7 which is sort of on the calendar for entities like
8 BPA and Portland General and Puget Sound Energy and
9 others to strengthen those transmission constraints
10 so that when the flows come over, that they still
11 need a place to go. In other words, if you -- it's
12 not just a question of going east to west. It's also
13 a question of going north to south.

14 So by contributing a line like ours -- and that's
15 the green sort of light-green line -- it goes
16 immediately to the problem of reaching the
17 north-south corridor. And that north-south corridor
18 serves not just the Portland area but goes all the
19 way up into Clark County, past Clark County, and into
20 the greater Seattle area. So there's a direct
21 benefit to Washington from a transmission point of
22 view.

23 Next.

24 So we call this a unique solution. Again, as I
25 said, this isn't the first time by any stretch that

1 such a project has been done and done successfully,
2 but we've -- we've already, as you can see, attracted
3 some interest from the press. But we feel that it
4 helps meet renewable energy goals. It helps improve
5 flexibility, resiliency, and safety of the grid. It
6 help -- helps meet increased load up and down that
7 north-south corridor between Seattle and Portland.
8 And it won't interfere with other infrastructure as
9 well as uses of the river.

10 So this is what the project looks like from a
11 great distance. It's about a hundred miles. And
12 what you see in the green is the underwater
13 transmission route. What you see in the yellow are
14 the places where the line will be buried underground.
15 So that's mostly in The Dalles. It's mostly for
16 about five miles in the Rivergate industrial area of
17 Portland. And then there's about a
18 seven-and-a-half-mile bypass around the Bonneville
19 Dam in Skamania County.

20 The land portion in Washington is simply the
21 bypass that I just referred to. It comes in at
22 Stevenson. It primarily takes Route 14, past the
23 Bonneville Dam, into the federal property, and exits
24 back into the river, as you see there on the -- on
25 the map.

1 If you can tell the -- sort of the purple lines,
2 the technology for entering and exit the river is
3 called horizontal directional drilling, or HDD. So
4 that is entirely underground. It goes very, very
5 deep from the land to the river so that it's not
6 digging a trench or anything into the water. It's
7 done via HDD or drilling.

8 The underground cable, itself, would be trenched
9 primarily in the bed or the shoulder of Route 14.
10 And that's a very, very conventional way of
11 installing pretty much any kind of utility, whether
12 it be an electric cable or a pipeline or water pipes,
13 that kind of thing.

14 Just real briefly, little bit of a closer view of
15 the Oregon route. And the Portland area. It exits
16 on Hayden Island. It goes over to the mainland and
17 is buried to what's called a converter station --
18 we'll get to that in a second -- and then off to the
19 Willamette River. It will go under the Willamette
20 River to an existing PGE substation called Harborton.

21 On the right-hand figure, there's -- I'm sure you
22 know -- a very large BPA complex. There's a
23 substation called Big Eddy. And we would propose to
24 build a converter station right by Big Eddy and
25 underground the line down to the river where it would

1 enter the river via HDD.

2 So kind of a fundamental question we get asked
3 yet: But why -- why use the river? Aren't there
4 other alternatives? We looked at other alternatives
5 very, very carefully. As we said before,
6 high-voltage overhead lines are very, very difficult
7 to site. There are instances in the Pacific
8 Northwest over the last several years where utilities
9 have tried to do that and have been stopped for
10 permitting and environmental issues.

11 It's hard to even imagine building an overhead
12 line through the gorge area. We got asked, Well, why
13 don't you just put it in I-84, bury it in I-84? The
14 simple answer to that is the Oregon DOT and the
15 Federal Highway Administration don't allow for that.
16 Maybe they should, but they don't.

17 Why not bury it all along State Route 14? It's
18 not constructible. The portion that we have
19 identified is constructible because it's pretty open.
20 And we've certainly consulted with the Washington DOT
21 on that. But to do the entire route, as I'm sure
22 we've all driven it many times, there are literally,
23 like, 300-and-something manmade obstacles or natural
24 obstacles to doing that. You could never get it
25 constructed.

1 Same for the railroad rights-of-way. And we've
2 looked at that as well. They're very narrow, and
3 obviously the railroads wouldn't want to suspend
4 their operation just to go through that.

5 So advantages of underwater: It's a proven
6 installation method. There's no visual impacts. And
7 as we'll talk about, the impacts to the environment
8 and fisheries habitat are minimal. It certainly
9 eliminates wildfire risk. Because of the nature of
10 the technology, direct current, it supports the grid
11 if other major lines go down due to weather or
12 whatever. And the underwater portion of the line
13 does not require regular maintenance for its entire
14 life.

15 So what are we talking about? You can hold it
16 up.

17 It has been suggested that we're talking about
18 putting a massive cable in the river and digging a
19 massive trench in the river. None of that is
20 correct. What Susan is holding up is one of two
21 cables. These are less than six inches in diameter.
22 So the bundle is around a foot. And it's combined
23 with a fiber-optic cable, which is not a commercial
24 thing. It's a communication thing for the -- for the
25 cable system, itself. And believe it or not, the

1 bundle can transport 1100 megawatts of energy.

2 Next.

3 The construction -- and it's a little hard to
4 explain this in -- although you can sort of YouTube
5 it for looking at comparable installations. But it's
6 a specialty process, although there's several
7 companies in the world that do this, where there's a
8 barge or a ship on the surface. The cable is played
9 out into a machine called a hydroplow or a jet plow.
10 The jet plow has a blade that can be adjusted to
11 achieve minimum depth or required depth below the
12 sediment.

13 And the trench, if you will, which is only about
14 two feet wide, is formed by water jets -- very
15 high-pressure water jets -- which fluidizes the
16 sediment. The cable is laid down into the trench in
17 a simultaneous process. And about 75 percent of the
18 sediment virtually immediately settles back down into
19 the trench.

20 So that's how it works. It doesn't leave a scar.
21 It doesn't leave, you know, a huge trench. There's
22 no dredging or mechanical operation. It's done --
23 and, again, this is a specialized procedure, but it's
24 one that is done relatively frequently around the
25 world.

1 Now, what you would see if you're looking out at
2 the river is that you'd see a fairly ordinary-looking
3 barge, as you see on the left, with a work boat or
4 two. The vessel would proceed pretty slowly, about a
5 mile and a half a day at best. So it's a very kind
6 of slow and gentle process to lay the cable in the
7 river, in the riverbed sediment. The depth of the
8 cable would be 10 to 15 feet below the sediment.

9 We mentioned converter stations. It's basically
10 not dissimilar from a regular substation. This photo
11 is of one in San Francisco. There was a similar
12 project built in 2010 called Trans Bay Cable. And
13 what you're seeing is the converter station in San
14 Francisco where the cable has been operating for 15
15 years.

16 Next.

17 So -- and Maria sort of alluded to some of
18 this -- is that this is a complicated project to
19 permit because it comes under federal jurisdiction
20 through the Army Corps of Engineers; through the
21 Washington process, EFSEC process; and a comparable
22 process in Oregon. So all of these agencies need to
23 come together and hopefully work cooperatively
24 together to study the project, analyze the project,
25 impose whatever conditions are deemed appropriate on

1 the project, and -- and move forward on kind of a
2 coordinated basis.

3 And, thus far, our observation is that they've
4 been doing that. And we appreciate that. We think
5 it's really the only way to -- to come to a decision
6 yes or no on this.

7 We have an awful lot of studies either underway
8 or completed, including what happens to the sediment
9 if it's stirred up, how far does it flow down the
10 river. The answer is "not very far."

11 Are there any particularly sensitive fishery
12 habitat that will be disturbed by this? Is the bed
13 of the Columbia River suitable for this kind of
14 installation? And on and on.

15 So there are many, many studies. Most of them
16 will be included in one form or other in the permit
17 documents. And this is something that we understand
18 requires an awful lot of analysis and study before it
19 can be approved.

20 Just very quickly, you're seeing where we are in
21 the state of Washington. In the state of Oregon, we
22 have held public meetings earlier in the process when
23 we filed what's called a notice of intent, because
24 the Oregon process is somewhat different from the
25 Washington process and in some ways requires other

1 types of information that Washington does not.

2 We are completing the application and expect to
3 be filing it in the fourth quarter, in this quarter
4 of this year. The Army Corps of Engineers
5 obviously -- because it's federal waters, the
6 Columbia River -- has a, you know, very strict
7 interest in any of the potential impacts:
8 Environmental, navigation, any impact on their
9 facilities. So we are undergoing those reviews.

10 And we have tried very hard to encourage
11 multiagency coordination. We periodically hold
12 meetings among all the agency personnel, not just the
13 corps, but different state agencies, federal
14 agencies, and more recently the tribes, who have been
15 invited to participate in those meetings. Those are
16 informational meetings, just so everybody to the
17 extent possible is on the same page.

18 We feel that there will be some direct benefits,
19 including a lot of construction jobs during the three
20 and a half years it will take. We are going to have
21 project labor agreements with the trades. In areas
22 where the cable will be buried, there's a potential
23 for property tax base increases. And we're looking
24 for opportunities to partner, whether with tribes,
25 with community colleges, for community organizations

1 to help move forward. Because we've done this
2 before. We understand that we can't just walk in and
3 say, well, we're going lay a cable. That there has
4 to be a partnership, there has to be understanding,
5 and there has to be benefit. So we fully expect to
6 do that.

7 Our development team, PowerBridge -- that's where
8 Susan and I work -- is located in Connecticut. As I
9 mentioned before, we have completed two such projects
10 between New York and New Jersey. The first one is 20
11 years old. The other one is coming on 15. And
12 they've been operating very well.

13 Sun2o is a solar developer. However, their
14 interest is in transmission, not in trying to
15 complete a particular generation project or anything
16 like that.

17 And, finally, NextEra Energy -- and we've got a
18 couple of folks from NextEra here -- who is a
19 development partner of ours. They're a leading
20 publicly traded utility and renewable developer, and
21 they're the owners and the operators of the Trans Bay
22 Cable project in San Francisco that we showed you a
23 picture of.

24 So I'm going to wind it up. The next page is
25 simply a listing of some of the major marine

1 transmission projects that have been done.

2 Next one, we already talked about our experience.

3 And I guess I'll just conclude by saying that
4 we -- we are experienced developers. We have done
5 this before successfully. We have a lot of respect
6 for the communities and the regions that we're in.
7 We want to be responsive. We want to be compliant.
8 And we want to be partners.

9 So, with that, hopefully I didn't take too long,
10 but I appreciate the time very much.

11 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you,
12 Mr. Hocker and Ms. Brown. Appreciate the good
13 overview, and that certainly -- kind of the kickoff
14 stating point at which we are for the EFSEC process
15 tonight is to have this project introduced in our
16 communities of record.

17 And as a heads-up again for the members of the
18 public and audience, soon we will turn to public
19 comment. Let me first pause, though, and see if
20 members of the Council have questions for our
21 applicants who have made the presentation tonight.

22 Council members. Or comments.

23 Council Nelson.

24 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Chair
25 Beckett.

1 I was wondering. Is that just for scale, or is
2 that an actual representation of the cable?

3 MR. HOCKER: That's it.

4 MR. NELSON: Okay. Would it be
5 okay if I take a look?

6 MR. HOCKER: Sure.

7 MS. BROWN: Pass it around.

8 MR. NELSON: So does this include
9 the casing of the cable? Is that what this is? Or
10 is there --

11 MR. HOCKER: That is the casing.

12 MR. NELSON: Okay.

13 MR. HOCKER: Yeah.

14 MR. NELSON: Do you know what it's
15 composed of? I just wonder about -- I don't know --
16 any kind of heavy metals, PPDs, that sort of thing.
17 Is it just rubber?

18 MR. HOCKER: It's -- the core of
19 the conductor is copper.

20 MR. NELSON: Yeah.

21 MR. HOCKER: And you're right.
22 There's various kinds of metals that shield it. And
23 the outer skin is a synthetic that essentially
24 protects it.

25 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

1 CHAIR BECKETT: Appreciate the
2 question.

3 Other Council members? Any comments or
4 questions?

5 Let me get back to my online screen here just to
6 make sure. Any other --

7 MR. RYBARIK: None from me --

8 CHAIR BECKETT: -- hands --

9 MR. RYBARIK: -- Chair Beckett. I
10 just wanted to give my appreciation for the -- for
11 the thorough and thoughtful overview there. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you, Council
14 Rybarik.

15 And I should note: Welcome to EFSEC, by the way.
16 I apologize for not having noted that earlier. Chair
17 of the Utilities and Transportation Commission who,
18 as of November 1st, has also selected a second half
19 for himself, which is to serve on the EFSEC Council
20 for the UTC. So appreciate you joining us tonight as
21 with everybody.

22 MR. RYBARIK: Thank you.

23 CHAIR BECKETT: So last call for
24 questions or comments from the EFSEC Council members.
25 Council Pamplin.

1 MR. PAMPLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 Also appreciate the overview. Just a question
3 about thinking about the -- the region's future
4 energy demand and the scope and scale of a project
5 like this and then the size of the transmission line
6 being proposed. And just was curious about: What
7 was the calculus that lined up that landed on a
8 12-inch cable delivering 1100 megawatts of energy
9 versus something larger that would generate more
10 energy or less to match what the -- the scale of
11 production of energy in eastern Washington? Thank
12 you.

13 MR. HOCKER: The sizing of the
14 cable is based on kind of a cross between available
15 technology and economics. In other words, you can't
16 get -- you can get a couple hundred megawatts more
17 through a cable this size. And, in fact, if
18 appropriate, depending on how the energy demands go,
19 it's conceivable that we could do that.

20 However, if you wanted to double that, you would
21 basically have to have two cable bundles. And you
22 would have associated costs with that. Because you
23 can't just lay multiple cable bundles. You have to
24 do it one at a time. And there has to be space -- I
25 like to talk with my hands. There has to be space

1 between the two cables. So it's not just a question
2 of, Gee, if we had -- we could carry 1200 megawatts
3 for 12 inches, could you do 2400 megawatts for -- no.
4 The answer is no. And we have very carefully -- so
5 this wasn't your question, but it's a point I'd like
6 to make.

7 The route we chose -- we have chosen in the river
8 has not been accidental. It has to do with avoiding
9 side slopes, avoiding sensitive habitat, avoiding
10 rocks, avoiding all kinds of things. So really the
11 cable route is sort of chosen on the basis of
12 elimination. In other words, we can't put it here
13 because of this. We can't put it here because of
14 that. So -- and if that's the case, is there such a
15 thing as a constructible path where the hydroplow
16 will work for that length?

17 And the answer is, to the best of our knowledge,
18 yes. But we have conducted a geophysical survey that
19 confirms that. And, frankly, if someone said, "Well,
20 you can only do this one if you'll do a second one,"
21 I'm pretty sure I'd say no, just because the -- the
22 constraints of the river, itself, of the riverbed,
23 are more than you would imagine.

24 And so it's a long answer to a short question,
25 but it is certainly something that we've thought

1 through. The overall energy need is going to
2 probably be two, three, four times more than the 11-
3 or 12- or 1300 megawatts that this could conceivably
4 carry. And BPA and others are working on that. But
5 this is -- this -- we feel that we are -- we are a
6 major step but certainly not the only step.

7 CHAIR BECKETT: Proceed.

8 MR. PAMPLIN: Thanks again,
9 Mr. Chairman. Appreciate that response. It's very
10 helpful.

11 Just one other question out of curiosity. What's
12 the anticipated life span or functional life span of
13 this line? Thank you.

14 MR. HOCKER: The -- the cable
15 manufacturer will tell you 40 years. The reality is
16 we think longer than that, just because there's
17 really nothing to -- to wear out. As I said before,
18 it doesn't require periodic maintenance. There's no
19 part replacement. This is -- unless something
20 happens like an anchor strike or something, you know,
21 then clearly you have to repair it. But other than
22 that, it's an inert piece of infrastructure.

23 Our project in New York that goes 60 miles, 50
24 underwater, runs literally 24/7, carrying in this
25 case 660 megawatts, and has done so for 20 years.

1 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you, Council
2 Pamplin.

3 Are there other comments or questions from the
4 Council?

5 Okay. Hearing none. It's my understanding that
6 there currently is not anyone who has previously
7 signed up for providing testimony tonight. If you
8 wish -- so you still may, or you can raise your hand
9 and approach the mike. We certainly would want to
10 have you state your name for the record. So let me
11 see if we have any participants who'd like to offer
12 comment.

13 Seeing none. If you change your mind here in the
14 next minute or so, I'll provide a couple other
15 comments, but please raise your hands in the
16 meantime, and we can still take your comments.

17 As you can see, this is the beginning of the
18 beginning, and we will take your comment, sir. So
19 why don't we just do that. And if you would -- I
20 believe you'd need to step to the microphone --

21 **THE WITNESS: Sorry.**

22 CHAIR BECKETT: -- and just state
23 your name for the record, please.

24 MR. BENNINGFIELD (PHONETIC): Yeah,
25 my name is Ken Benningfield (phonetic), and I'm a

1 union worker, but I also reside out there in Home
2 Valley past Stevenson. So I'm really tight-knit with
3 the community. My fiancée is actually starting her
4 own business out there as well. So we're all part of
5 the fishing and the natural resources that are out
6 there for us to enjoy.

7 And my only question to you was that the
8 underwater line you guys do have in San Francisco for
9 20 years, how much maintenance have you guys had to
10 do on that line underwater so far?

11 MR. HOCKER: Well, the San
12 Francisco line -- actually, Tyler, do you know the
13 answer to that? I know that, with the exception of
14 an anchor strike, with its 15-year life, there was no
15 maintenance on -- the maintenance is in the converter
16 stations.

17 MR. BENNINGFIELD: Okay.

18 MR. HOCKER: Okay.

19 MR. BENNINGFIELD: Okay.

20 MR. HOCKER: But the line, itself,
21 like I said, requires none of that. And --

22 MR. BENNINGFIELD: Okay.

23 MR. HOCKER: -- we've not had any
24 maintenance on our lines, our underwater lines in New
25 York and Jersey.

1 MR. BENNINGFIELD: Perfect. I
2 appreciate it. Thank you.

3 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you for the
4 questions.

5 Any other folks who'd like to step up, offer a
6 word?

7 Okay. Well, then soon we will bring this to a
8 close. I should have noted, and I'll do so just a
9 couple points for the record. Ordinarily we do take
10 about three minutes per comment.

11 And is there another, Ms. Grantham?

12 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes, Chair Beckett.
13 I see someone online with their hand raised. Looks
14 like a Bryan Mattson.

15 CHAIR BECKETT: Okay. Mr. Mattson,
16 if you'd like to offer your comments, we would
17 certainly welcome them at this time and would
18 appreciate trying to stick to the three minutes,
19 which is our standard.

20 MR. MATTSON: Thank you, sir.

21 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

22 MR. MATTSON: Bryan Mattson. I'm
23 with Clark County. I'm just curious, you know.
24 You've mentioned possible anchor strikes a couple of
25 times. I have no idea. That's why I'm asking this

1 question. What would happen if you got an anchor
2 strike and it -- and it compromised the sleeve and
3 the cable inside was exposed to the water? What
4 would -- I mean, what happens when that would -- if
5 that was to occur?

6 MR. HOCKER: Well, it doesn't
7 happen very often. I'll say that. The cable is
8 buried 10 to 15 feet below the sediment. So it's a
9 very, very, very unusual event.

10 When something like that happens -- and it has
11 been known to happen -- the -- it's repaired with a
12 splice as you might repair, you know, a much smaller
13 cable. It's of course a little more difficult
14 because you have to pull out the section of damaged
15 cable, bring it up to a barge. You cut away the
16 damaged area, and you splice a new cable.

17 And we have replacement cable on our projects
18 right now that we've never used. But you splice that
19 cable. And it's -- that's specialized work. No
20 question about it.

21 But the bottom line is, is that that's what
22 happens. It's a several-week process. You can
23 identify where the damage is. And of course that
24 would be subject to whatever permitting requirements
25 were in place. It would be considered an emergency

1 of -- particularly if it's carrying 1100 megawatt.
2 And -- but it would be subject to whatever
3 environmental considerations might be applicable,
4 which would probably have to do with where it is,
5 when it is, all that kind of thing.

6 But --

7 MR. MATTSON: So --

8 MR. HOCKER: It's doable. We
9 don't -- we don't like to think about it, but it's
10 doable.

11 MR. MATTSON: Thank you. I get
12 that it would be repaired. I don't think I -- I
13 don't think I worded my question specific enough.

14 Does it kill a certain radius of fish or
15 wildlife? That's what I was wondering. You know,
16 what -- what happens? Does the area underground --
17 does --

18 MR. HOCKER: Oh.

19 MR. MATTSON: -- right? --
20 whatever's swimming by get zapped or, you know --

21 MR. HOCKER: No. No.

22 MR. MATTSON: (Unintelligible)
23 terms. I'm just (unintelligible) --

24 MR. HOCKER: No. Sorry. If the
25 question goes to is there some sort of electrical

1 impact...

2 MR. MATTSON: Right.

3 MR. HOCKER: Okay. The answer is
4 no. And the reason is, is that the minute there's a
5 damage or anything like that -- not a minute; the
6 millisecond -- the whole system shuts off. And one
7 of the -- you know, that's one of the reasons for
8 the --

9 MS. BROWN: Fiber.

10 MR. HOCKER: -- fiber -- thanks;
11 I'm getting prompted here -- fiber-optic cable, is
12 that it's a continuous means of communication between
13 the converter stations, and it tells the operator,
14 "Oops, we've got a problem," and it shuts off in,
15 like, a fraction of a second.

16 So, no, there's not electricity in the water or
17 anything like that.

18 MR. MATTSON: Okay. Thank you.

19 Thank you, sir.

20 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you,
21 Mr. Hocker.

22 Mr. Mattson, thank you for your questions.

23 Any other comments online, Ms. Grantham? Or
24 hands raised, I should say.

25 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes. I see a Ryann

1 Hinch.

2 CHAIR BECKETT: Ryann Hinch.

3 MS. HINCH: Hi. Thank you. Hi.

4 Can you hear me?

5 CHAIR BECKETT: We can.

6 MS. HINCH: All right. Thank you
7 so much for taking time to talk to us tonight.

8 I had actually two questions. Would you like me
9 to give them to you at the same time or separately?

10 CHAIR BECKETT: I think if you
11 could state both for the record at the same time.
12 And given this is an informational meeting, I'm
13 employing a little extra latitude on the dialogue
14 here tonight. But obviously questions draw out
15 answers. So please offer your questions, and our
16 applicants, I'm sure, will do their best to answer
17 them.

18 MS. HINCH: I was curious about
19 raising water temperatures, considering that, you
20 know, cables put off a lot of heat.

21 And my second question was: What does, like, the
22 end of useful life look like? Like, cleaning up,
23 replacement. What does that look like?

24 MR. HOCKER: On the first question,
25 which was the temperature question, we have modeled

1 the thermal impact of the cable. And the short
2 answer is -- and I'll try to be short -- is that at
3 10 feet or more below the sediment, below the mud
4 line, certainly if you were right at the cable, you
5 would know that it was warm. That's really not
6 trying to be flip, because it's warm, but it's not,
7 like, ultra hot. But by the time the heat rises
8 through the sediment, into the water column, there's
9 no change. For much the same reason as if you
10 wouldn't want to touch a light bulb, but if you held
11 your hand, you know, a foot away from the light bulb,
12 you probably wouldn't feel much.

13 So the -- between the sediment and the water, it
14 dissipates the heat so that by the time it rises to
15 the water column, there's no impact.

16 Second is what happens -- if I state your
17 question correctly -- what happens at the end of its
18 useful life.

19 That's actually a determination for the agencies.
20 Because you could -- you could probably make a case
21 either to leave it in place as an inert object that's
22 been there for 50 years or whatever, or you could
23 make a case that, well, it's not part of the natural
24 environment, so take it out. And we -- we would do
25 either.

1 CHAIR BECKETT: Understood.

2 Thank you for the questions and for the
3 information in response.

4 Any other online hands or in our audience?

5 I see another person. If you'd come forward, and
6 please state your name for the record. And we will
7 reset the clock for three minutes. Welcome.

8 MS. MURPHY: Thank you.

9 My name is Kate Murphy, and I actually just also
10 had a question, which is I know that you moved --
11 negotiated the route to avoid some of the Superfund
12 sites that have been identified where the
13 concentrations of contamination are.

14 I'm curious, since we have advisories for the
15 Mid- -- throughout the Mid-Columbia for things like
16 PCBs and mercury, what type of modeling and research
17 have you done around stirring up those potential
18 contaminants and making those more available?

19 Yeah, that is my question. Thank you.

20 MR. HOCKER: Good question.

21 First of all, the route, itself, will avoid any
22 of the, I'll call it surface contamination, you know,
23 the heavy contamination, for instance, in the
24 Willamette, where our cable would go so far below
25 that that there would be no impact.

1 We have done what's called sediment transport
2 modeling to indicate, you know, is there a lot of
3 stuff, whatever it is, stirred up and taken down the
4 river. The answer is "very little."

5 And generally just generally to your -- to your
6 point, is the -- the concentration -- the
7 unacceptable concentration of contaminants, we have
8 avoided that in our routing. So we don't feel we
9 can -- we could show you studies that indicate that
10 where we're going and the impact of the installation
11 process would not create sort of a cloud of
12 contaminants going down the river.

13 MS. MURPHY: Thank you. I'd love
14 to see those studies, if those could be made
15 available publicly.

16 And I also have a question about the Bonneville
17 Dam; Bradford Island Superfund site specifically.

18 Given that the folks in charge of investigating
19 that site have not yet established the nature and
20 extent of the contamination and that's still ongoing,
21 what kind of confidence level do you have that you
22 have avoided the boundary of the contamination since
23 it hasn't been established?

24 MR. HOCKER: Well, I should have
25 mentioned and will mention now that we have done at

1 this point some limited soil sampling on either side
2 of the Bonneville Dam because we'll be exiting the
3 river east of the dam and re-entering. So it's
4 important to do sediment characterization in those
5 locations.

6 And so we did not find contaminants in those
7 locations. So we're aware of the -- is it Bradford?
8 Bradford Island? We're aware of that but are
9 convinced that where we're going is avoiding that
10 particular location completely.

11 MS. MURPHY: There are -- the
12 nature of that contamination at that site is not -- I
13 would encourage more studies because there's pockets
14 of contamination. It's not just ubiquitous
15 throughout the environment. Because there was a lot
16 of dumping that happened then, and not all of that
17 was tracked well. So I wouldn't be too confident
18 just based off the small sample set because of that.

19 But I appreciate that. And if the -- if you can
20 point us to where those studies are available, that
21 would be great. Thank you.

22 MR. HOCKER: Okay.

23 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you for your
24 questions as well as the responses, which may be
25 slightly out of the norm, but I think ultimately is

1 an ability to capture questions that are on people's
2 mind and know that the Council as well as our
3 processes are ultimately reflective of those and what
4 the Council chooses to do.

5 So, with that, any other last people?

6 Seeing none. Then I will move -- I'm sorry.

7 Council members, any other closing questions,
8 comments?

9 Okay. Then we will conclude the first portion of
10 our hearing at 6:39 p.m. And I will do the thing of
11 gavelling us back in and starting our second item
12 this evening.

13 (Meeting concluded at
14 6:39 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 public informational meeting of the
6 Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council was
7 conducted in my presence and concluded on November 17, 2025,
8 and thereafter was transcribed under my direction; that the
9 transcript is a full, true and complete transcript of the
10 said meeting, transcribed to the best of my ability;

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

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
16 this 2nd day of December, 2025.

17 _____
18 /s/John M. S. Botelho, CCR, RPR
19 Certified Court Reporter No. 2976
20 (Certification expires 5/26/2026.)
21
22
23
24
25