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TRANSCRIPT

November 19, 2025

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1
2 STATE OF WASHINGTON
3 ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL
4
5 CASCADE RENEWABLE TRANSMISSION PROJECT
6 EFSEC DOCKET NO. 230002
7 PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING

8
9
10 November 19, 2025

11 5:32 p.m.

12 White Salmon, Washington
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24 REPORTED BY: Stephanie C. Rhinehart, RPR,
25 WA CCR 22013531, OR CSR 22-0014

1 APPEARANCES

2 ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL MEMBERS:

3 Kurt Beckett, Chair

4 Blake Nelson
5 Department of Ecology

6 Nate Pamplin (*)
7 Department of Fish and Wildlife

8 Maverick Ryan (*)
9 Department of Natural Resources

10 Brian Rybarik (*)
11 Department of Utilities & Transportation Commission

12 ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL:

13 Jon Thompson (*)

14 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE:

15 Russell Mikow (*)

16 COUNCIL STAFF:

17 Sonia Bumpus (*) Lance Caputo Lisa McLean
18 Ami Hafkemeyer Alex Shiley Adrienne Barker (*)
19 Joan Owens Karl Holappa
20 Andrea Grantham Maria Belkina

21 COUNSEL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT:

22 Yuriy Korol (*)

23 IN ATTENDANCE:

24 Chris Hocker, PowerBridge
25 Susan Brown, PowerBridge

(*) indicates remote attendees

HEARING INDEX

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* * *

1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on Wednesday,
2 November 19, 2025, at Mountain View Grange #98, 1085 North
3 Main Avenue, White Salmon, Washington, and via
4 videoconference, the following Public Informational Hearing
5 of the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation
6 Council was held at 5:32 p.m.:

7
8 * * *

9 CHAIR BECKETT: Well, good evening, everyone.
10 I'm Kurt Beckett. I'm Chair of the Energy Facility
11 Site Evaluation Council, the Washington Energy Facility
12 Site Evaluation Council. And let me get, I guess, my
13 other document here. Sorry. Busy day.

14 I'm going to call this meeting to order at
15 5:32 p.m. And just a couple opening remarks, and then
16 we will officially further kind of gavel in and call
17 our roll for our EFSEC Council and do a few
18 introductions.

19 So again, welcome. For those of you who are here
20 in person tonight, we certainly appreciate you joining
21 us and certainly appreciate those who are online, both
22 other Council and Staff members and, most importantly,
23 other members of the public.

24 We'll begin this evening with a public
25 informational meeting, as required by state law. And

1 the purpose of this meeting is to provide an overview
2 of both the EFSEC review process followed by a little
3 deeper overview of the Cascade Renewable Transmission
4 project. We will then receive any public comments from
5 both our in-room and online attendees on issues and
6 questions that you believe should be included in the
7 EFSEC project review.

8 The second meeting, which will begin after,
9 obviously, the first project informational meeting
10 ends. And that is specifically about land use
11 consistency. We will have Judge Russell Mikow joining
12 us for that portion, which we'll speak to more once we
13 get there.

14 And with that, let me further call this order --
15 to order -- and Ms. Grantham would please call the
16 EFSEC Council roll.

17 MS. GRANTHAM: Certainly, Chair.

18 Department of Commerce.

19 CHAIR BECKETT: Will be absent tonight.

20 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of Ecology.

21 MR. NELSON: Blake Nelson, present.

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

24 MR. PAMPLIN: Nate Pamplin. Present and
25 participating virtually.

1 MS. GRANTHAM: Department of Natural
2 Resources.

3 MR. RYAN: Maverick Ryan, present,
4 participating virtually.

5 MS. GRANTHAM: Utilities and Transportation
6 Commission.

7 MR. RYBARIK: Brian Rybarik, present and
8 participating virtually.

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

11 MR. THOMPSON: I'm present online.

12 MS. GRANTHAM: Administrative Law
13 Judge Russell Mikow.

14 JUDGE MIKOW: I'm present online.

15 MS. GRANTHAM: For Council Staff here today,
16 Sonia Bumpus.

17 MS. BUMPUS: I'm present online.

18 MS. GRANTHAM: Ami Hafkemeyer.

19 MS. HAFKEMEYER: Present.

20 MS. GRANTHAM: Lance Caputo.

21 MR. CAPUTO: Present.

22 MS. GRANTHAM: Karl Holappa.

23 MR. HOLAPPA: Present.

24 MS. GRANTHAM: Maria Belkina.

25 MS. BELKINA: Present.

1 MS. GRANTHAM: And Lisa McLean.

2 MS. McLEAN: Online.

3 MS. GRANTHAM: And do we have anyone present
4 for the Counsel for the Environment?

5 MR. KOROL: Yuriy Korol, present appearing
6 online.

7 MS. GRANTHAM: Thank you.

8 Chair, there is a quorum.

9 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you very much. Let me
10 next do a couple additional introductions. And if I
11 could give our Counsel for the Environment a quick
12 heads-up that, when I'm done with a couple of these, I
13 would turn this back to you for a brief word on the
14 role of the Counsel for the Environment.

15 And first, let me recognize our colleague from
16 Oregon, Chris Clark, who's also with EFSC of Oregon,
17 which is housed within the Department of Energy within
18 that state. One key distinction is Washington -- like,
19 with kind of two "vees" -- we have two Es, and Oregon
20 is the EFSC with one E. So quick way to think about
21 that. This is ultimately a joint project. We're
22 focusing on the Washington side of these issues
23 tonight.

24 And with that, let me also ask if our Applicants
25 will go ahead and introduce their team, and then we'll

1 move to the EFSEC Staff and soon into presentation.

2 MR. HOCKER: Sure. Thank you. I'm
3 Chris Hocker with the lead developer PowerBridge; my
4 colleague, Susan Brown. And there are a few others in
5 the audience associated with the project who,
6 hopefully, some of you have been talking to already.
7 And, certainly, any questions like that that you might
8 have, someone can answer.

9 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you. Let me go ahead
10 and actually turn this back to our Counsel for the
11 Environment just so that we can make sure that everyone
12 understands the role of that -- well, that role for the
13 people of Washington.

14 Counsel?

15 MR. KOROL: Hello, everyone. My name is
16 Yuriy Korol. I'm an Assistant Attorney General with
17 the Environment Protection Division. I have been
18 appointed Counsel for the Environment -- for this
19 particular project. And in my role, which is statutory
20 in nature, my job is to represent the public and its
21 interest in protecting the quality in the environment.
22 So in practice, that means I can submit comments. I'm
23 also a party participant in any adjudications, should
24 there be any.

25 I will be looking at the environmental impacts of

1 this project on my own, but I also encourage public
2 participation. So if you feel like you have any
3 information that I should be aware of or should
4 consider, please feel free to send them my way. My
5 name and contact information is on the project-specific
6 website, on the EFSEC website, and I can also drop them
7 in the chat for this meeting.

8 Yeah. I think that pretty much covers it. If you
9 have any questions, please let me know.

10 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you, Counsel.

11 All right. With that, let me turn this to our
12 EFSEC Staff, starting with our director, Sonia Bumpus,
13 for any opening remarks. And then we'll move to our
14 PowerPoint overview of the EFSEC process.

15 MS. BUMPUS: Chair Beckett -- sounding clear?

16 CHAIR BECKETT: I think we've got you now.
17 But if it starts to fade, I might note to "douse" your
18 camera. But we've got you so far.

19 MS. BUMPUS: Okay. Yeah. Just let me know.
20 I think there's a lag.

21 So I just have to make a few remarks before we
22 begin the presentation by Staff. My name is
23 Sonia Bumpus. I am the executive director of the
24 Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council agency. I want
25 to welcome you this evening and thank you -- it means a

1 lot to us. We know everybody...

2 CHAIR BECKETT: Director Bumpus, it is
3 starting to fade out, perhaps. It may be on our end.
4 But why don't you try your camera, and then we'll see
5 how that goes. And otherwise, we can turn to
6 Ms. Hafkemeyer.

7 All right. Let's pause on that.

8 And, Ami, I'm going to start. And if you want to
9 supplement --

10 (Interruption in proceedings.)

11 CHAIR BECKETT: Director Bumpus, I think
12 we're going to toggle into the room here and see...

13 MS. BUMPUS: Looks like it cut out.

14 CHAIR BECKETT: The world -- the world we
15 live in.

16 All right, Director Bumpus, I'm going to turn here
17 to Ms. Hafkemeyer.

18 And I think, ultimately, what Director Bumpus was
19 trying to make sure and help convey is -- where we're
20 at in the process, which is certainly the beginning,
21 there are many aspects of things that need to happen on
22 the front-end, some of which are a work in progress and
23 many others still to come.

24 So with that, Ami, if I can pitch this to you.

25 MS. HAFKMEYER: Of course, thank you.

1 So thank you for joining us this evening. We're
2 here, really, to introduce ourselves as an agency,
3 introduce the project that is now in front of us along
4 with the Applicant. And what we'd like to do tonight
5 is tell you a little bit about ourselves. The
6 Applicant will tell you a little bit about the project.
7 And this is really the initiation of our process; so
8 any comments that you have tonight will certainly
9 inform our review.

10 We have a presentation to go over our process a
11 little bit, and we want you to raise any questions or
12 any initial thoughts that you have. But I would like
13 to also make it known that because this is the
14 beginning, there's many opportunities for comment as we
15 proceed through the process and many opportunities to
16 engage with the Staff to ask any questions down the
17 line, give any feedback throughout the process. And
18 so, hopefully, as the presentations come forward,
19 you'll learn a little bit more about the project and a
20 little bit more about our agency.

21 We encourage you to engage with the process. We
22 have a project-specific mailing list. And so if you'd
23 like to stay updated on project activity, we strongly
24 encourage you to sign up for that. We also have
25 monthly Council meetings where project updates will be

1 given to the Council each month on what the current
2 status of the project is. So if this is something that
3 you'd like to continue to be engaged in and would like
4 to stay up to date on, please sign up for the mailing
5 list, please join our monthly Council meetings.

6 And I think that concludes my remarks. I'll hand
7 it over to our siting specialists, Maria Belkina and
8 Lance Captuto.

9 MS. BELKINA: Thank you, Ami.

10 Welcome, everybody. Thank you all for coming to
11 participate this evening. My name is Maria Belkina.
12 I'm siting specialist for EFSEC, and I would like to
13 introduce my colleague, Lance Caputo. We will be
14 giving a short presentation on the EFSEC process for
15 those who are unfamiliar with our agency.

16 **A little bit of the history of the EFSEC agency.**
17 **EFSEC was created in 1970 for the siting of thermal**
18 **power plants. The intent was to create a one-stop**
19 **permitting agency for large energy facilities. EFSEC**
20 **is comprised of state and local government members who**
21 **review each application before voting to make a Council**
22 **recommendation to the governor.**

23 If recommending approval, the package to the
24 governor includes a draft certification agreement, or
25 SCA, which defines all pre-construction, construction

1 and operation plans. If approved by the Governor's
2 Office, the decision preempts other state or local
3 regulations.

4 EFSEC is comprised of members from several
5 different state-level agencies. The chairperson's
6 appointed by the governor, and there are standing
7 members from five other agencies appointed by those
8 agencies to sit on the Council. There are additional
9 agencies that may elect to appoint a Council member
10 during the review of a new application.

11 The local county shall also appoint a Council
12 member for the review -- a new application. If a
13 proposal project is located at a port, the port may
14 appoint an non-voting member.

15 Multiple energy generation facilities fall under
16 EFSEC jurisdiction. Some projects, such as thermal
17 power plants greater than 350 megawatts and nuclear
18 generation for the purpose of generating electricity,
19 are required to be sited through EFSEC. While others
20 such as wind, solar, green hydrogen, storage, or clean
21 energy manufacturing can opt in at any size.
22 Transmission lines greater then 115 kilovolts can also
23 opt in while lines greater than 500 kilovolts
24 alternating current or 300 kilovolts direct current are
25 required.

1 Here is a map of the facilities that are certified
2 or have applied for certification under EFSEC's
3 jurisdiction. You can see, marked in green, there are
4 seven operating facilities including two natural gas
5 facilities, one nuclear facility, two solar facilities,
6 and two wind facilities. The blue marks indicate the
7 four additional facilities that are approved but are
8 not yet constructed. The clear circle -- the one
9 facility in the process of decommissioning. EFSEC is
10 currently reviewing seven projects marked by yellow,
11 including the Cascade Renewable Transmission.

12 MR. CAPUTO: Don't be intimidated by this
13 flowchart.

14 MS. BELKINA: Your mic...

15 MR. CAPUTO: Thank you for reminding me.

16 Here's a flowchart showing the general process an
17 applicant will go through when they submit an
18 application to EFSEC. There are yellow boxes on the
19 chart that indicate specific milestones in the process
20 where the Council and Staff seek public input. You can
21 see that there are multiple processes that happen
22 concurrently when EFSEC is reviewing an application.

23 The permitting process outlined across the top row
24 involves identifying and preparing applicable
25 environmental permits, the land use and adjudicative

1 process running through the middle. And the State
2 Environmental Policy Act, or SEPA process, is shown
3 along the bottom.

4 All these processes ultimately feed into the
5 Council's recommendation made to the governor where an
6 adjudication is required following the Land Use
7 Consistency Hearing, which will be later tonight. An
8 order is issued to commence proceeding and initiate
9 intervention. There are prehearing conferences through
10 which parties are granted intervention status and
11 issues are identified. Adjudicative hearings are then
12 held. After this, the Council looks at all the
13 information in the adjudication record and deliberates.

14 Finally, the Council develops an order
15 establishing their findings of fact and conclusions of
16 law from the information provided throughout these
17 proceedings.

18 For every project proposed, a SEPA review is
19 performed. When a determination of significance and a
20 decision to prepare an environmental impact
21 statement -- or an EIS -- is made, public comments are
22 taken on the scope of the EIS. After public comment
23 for scoping, the SEPA responsible official, which is
24 the agency director, determines the scope of the EIS.

25 **A draft EIS is prepared and issued with a minimum**

1 30-day public comment period, after which the final EIS
2 is prepared and released.

3 Following the conclusion of these separate avenues
4 of application review, the Council develops its
5 recommendation to the governor, tying together the
6 information brought forth through the application
7 review process.

8 To be considered for expedited processing, an
9 applicant must make the request in writing. If the
10 project meets two criteria of land use consistency and
11 a mitigated determination of significant --
12 non-significance is issued, the Council can grant
13 expedited process review. In this expedited process,
14 the adjudication step is not required, and an
15 environmental impact statement is not prepared.

16 Applications granted for expedited processing do
17 hold an additional public meeting prior to the
18 Council's recommendation to hear any conditions that
19 may be considered to impose on a project. A condition
20 use -- which is a conditional use -- I'm sorry -- may
21 be considered to impose on the project a conditional
22 use process hearing. The Council prepares a
23 recommendation to the governor an expedited time frame
24 under this process.

25 EFSEC is also the issuing agency for any

1 applicable state and local environmental permits a
2 facility may require, including water quality and air
3 quality permits as they may apply.

4 The permits are identified in the final package
5 with the Council's recommendation to the governor. If
6 an application is approved by the governor, EFSEC then
7 has oversight of the environmental compliance for the
8 life of the facility through decommissioning. EFSEC
9 has standing contracts with applicable state agencies
10 that assist in the monitoring and enforcement of
11 conditions, either in the Site Certification Agreement,
12 identified permits, the Environmental Impact Statement,
13 or the Mitigated Determination of Non-significance.

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

23 As previously mentioned, EFSEC oversees facilities
24 under its jurisdiction through decommissioning.
25 Decommissioning plans must be reviewed and approved by

1 the Council. The project must also provide financial
2 assurance for the decommissioning in the event that the
3 project is no longer able to complete the process.
4 Assuming the project decommissions while still under
5 full control of the developer, these costs would be
6 paid by the certificate holder directly.

7 MS. BELKINA: And, also, I would like to add
8 our work is closely coordinated with the Oregon
9 Department of Energy and the U.S. Army Corps of
10 Engineers, ensuring that both states and federal
11 agencies are aligned in the environmental and
12 permitting review.

13 That wraps up our presentation for this evening.
14 And before we end, I'd like to remind everyone how they
15 might submit comments for this proposal.

16 You may send in written comments by email to
17 comments@EFSEC.wa.gov; by postal mail to our office
18 at -- listed here -- 621 Woodland Square Loop,
19 P.O. Box 43172, Olympia, Washington 98504-3172; or by
20 phone at 360-664-1345. When EFSEC is in an active
21 comment period associated with a specific milestone,
22 comment -- comments may also be submitted to our online
23 comment database -- <https://comments.EFSEC.wa.gov>.

24 All comments received regardless of timing or
25 method of delivery will be saved with the project

1 record and available to Council and Staff for review.
2 Thank you.

3 CHAIR BECKETT: Okay. Thank you both.

4 So with that, we will -- as queued up -- to our
5 Applicant's presentation, which we welcome.

6 Mr. Hocker.

7 MR. HOCKER: Thanks for coming out. Thank
8 you to EFSEC. And we'll try to make this as brief as
9 we can. Again, my --

10 CHAIR BECKETT: Mr. Hocker, you might move
11 that mic just a little bit closer and --

12 MR. HOCKER: Little bit? Okay. Is that
13 better?

14 (Interruption in proceedings.)

15 MR. HOCKER: Are we all right? Okay.

16 CHAIR BECKETT: And, certainly, we appreciate
17 this is the focus of the evening; so we certainly want
18 to make sure you get out what you -- thank you.

19 MR. HOCKER: So I'm Chris Hocker. I'm with a
20 company called PowerBridge. We're based in
21 Connecticut. And PowerBridge has specialized in
22 submarine transmission projects on the East Coast. We
23 developed, constructed, and currently operate two such
24 projects that are very comparable to the one we are
25 proposing tonight.

1 Before I go any further, I do want to acknowledge
2 we're very well aware that this whole area of the
3 Columbia River is the ancestral home of
4 Indigenous Tribes. We have been, over the last few
5 years, reaching out and continue to reach out and
6 engage with the Tribes. And I just, you know, wanted
7 to make sure that everyone knows that we're very, very
8 well aware of the importance of the Columbia River and
9 the surrounding area, not just to the Tribes but
10 everybody who lives here.

11 We might as well get started. We're going to talk
12 about the situation currently and the need for the
13 project as we see it. We're going to describe the
14 method of installation, what it does, how it works;
15 show you where it's going; and give sort of an overview
16 of the environmental reviews and the agency processes
17 that will determine whether this project goes forward
18 or not.

19 Next, we think it's important to understand, not
20 just from our perspective but from a regional
21 perspective, that there's a very significant constraint
22 on the current transmission system. If you go way
23 further east, that system, which is primarily BPA, is
24 not so constrained. But when you get to a point right
25 around here or right around The Dalles, that's when the

1 system becomes very much constrained to get it to
2 basically where the people are, west of the Cascades.
3 There's been any number of studies that indicate a
4 tremendous additional need for the -- additional need
5 for energy over the next five to ten years.

6 In addition, as I'm sure you're aware, both states
7 of Washington and Oregon passed clean energy laws.
8 They differ slightly, but the impact is to ultimately
9 require 100 percent clean energy in both states by,
10 depending on which state, 2040 or 2045.

11 So the dilemma is -- how do we move cleaner energy
12 from east of the Cascades when there's no transmission
13 available to support it? Our project is designed to
14 help meet that constraint. It is not the ultimate
15 solution to the problem, which is much larger than what
16 our project can provide.

17 So you can see on the screen basically what I just
18 said. I mean, there's a number of factors pointing in
19 the direction of moving energy consumption in this
20 region to clean and renewable. The transmission
21 constraints already exist between east of the Cascades
22 and the load centers along the western part, not just
23 Portland -- I'll get into that a little bit -- but all
24 the way up and down the, sort of, I-5 corridor up to
25 Seattle. It's very challenging, as I'm sure you

1 recognize, to build new overhead transmission lines,
2 particularly in an area as sensitive as the
3 Columbia Gorge.

4 So this next slide is not the easiest thing to
5 intuitively understand. And I'll try not to belabor
6 it, but this is kind of a depiction of the way energy
7 flows from east of the Cascades to the west. And
8 there's -- there are a lot of ongoing studies that
9 indicate the kind of upgrades of the transmission
10 system that will be needed to actually complete the
11 process of un-constraining, un-bottlenecking the
12 transmission system.

13 Unfort- -- well, for better or for worse, the
14 transmission system is complex. It's a system; it's
15 not just a point-to-point transmission line. So all of
16 these, like the blue circles and the black and the
17 red -- these are all sort of proposed upgrades that
18 would be needed in order to facilitate the removal of
19 the constraints that exist.

20 Our project is the green line. And the advantage
21 there is that it moves directly from east to the west
22 without necessitating all these other upgrades. Now,
23 in my opinion, many of those other upgrades will
24 probably have to be done in order to meet the demand,
25 but ours can at least bypass having to do those

1 upgrades and help relieve the constraints, we think,
2 earlier than the other upgrades can be done.

3 So we're going to be talking about a solution
4 that, in our opinion, helps meet the renewable energy
5 goals, helps improve resiliency and safety. Obviously,
6 underwater transmission line does not carry the risk of
7 wildfire or going down in bad weather and that kind of
8 thing. It helps the increasing load in the West, and
9 won't interfere with river uses and other
10 infrastructure.

11 And can I go back to the -- to this confusing
12 slide here. This helps answer the question "What does
13 this do for Washington?" Because, clearly, we're
14 starting in The Dalles; we're ending in Portland. So
15 this must be a strictly Oregon-beneficial project, and
16 we're just sort of asking you to let us pass through.
17 That's not the case. And the reason is -- that I tried
18 to explain -- that the real aim is to get to this
19 north-south corridor and relieve the constraints so the
20 power can flow better north and south, including north
21 up to the load centers in Washington.

22 So our project is about 80 miles underwater and
23 about 20 miles on land. It's hard to depict a
24 hundred-mile project in one slide, but this just shows
25 a map of where it is -- the green being the underwater

1 portion, the yellow being the on-land portion. In
2 Washington, there's really only one area where there's
3 a land base effect, which is about a seven-mile bypass
4 around the Bonneville Dam.

5 And this is a slightly easier depiction of the
6 route in Skamania County. It lands in Stevenson. It
7 primarily uses State Route 14, buried underground. I
8 should emphasize that no portion of the transmission
9 line itself will be visible. It will go around the
10 Bonneville Dam, as you see, and reenter the river. If
11 you can make out -- it's hard to see, but if you can
12 make out sort of a -- little purple bars, the way the
13 line is brought out of the river and back into the
14 river is with a construction technique that's very well
15 accepted called horizontal directional drilling, or
16 HDD.

17 So the entry and exit in and out of the river does
18 not involve trenching through shoreline or any of that.
19 In fact, the drill proceeds very, very deep from the
20 starting point into the river. And when I say "very
21 deep," around 40 or 50 feet deep. So there's no
22 interference with surface habitat or anything like
23 that.

24 Just to complete the picture, there are land
25 routes, both in The Dalles and in the Portland -- it's

1 called the Rivergate Industrial area. So -- and,
2 again, these -- the line will be buried primarily under
3 public rights-of-way. That does involve trenching
4 about 4 feet in the road, very similar to what you
5 would see up for an underground power line or a
6 pipeline, waterline, any of that -- conventional
7 construction techniques.

8 So why underwater? It's not just because we've
9 done underwater. It's because there are very few
10 constructible and feasible alternatives available. And
11 we have looked at those. And, in fact, the EFSEC
12 permit application, both in Washington and in Oregon,
13 as well as the Army Corps of Engineers permit
14 applications require a rigorous alternatives analysis.

15 But very briefly, there is no available path
16 through The Gorge for an overhead transmission line.
17 You would think, "Well, okay. Can't you just bury it
18 all the way in, say, I-84?" And the answer is no. And
19 the reason for that is that that kind of linear
20 parallel utility is not allowed by either Oregon DOT or
21 the Federal Highway Administration. And that's aside
22 from any constructibility issues, of which there are
23 many.

24 The same goes for many portions of State Route 14.
25 I'm sure we've all driven it. I think we counted more

1 than 300 obstructions, obstacles, or very, very grave
2 engineering challenges that make an entire route along
3 State Route 14 not constructible, not feasible. Now,
4 the area we're in, which is just a few miles, is pretty
5 clear. We've been consulting with the Washington DOT.
6 And so it can be done for short distances, but not for
7 the length that we're talking about.

8 Same for the railroad rights-of-way on either side
9 of the river. If you drive along 14 and look at that
10 railroad right-of-way, it's very, very narrow. There
11 are bridges and constructions. The point is -- we've
12 looked at this. And in order to help meet the
13 transmission needs, resolve those constraints, and meet
14 the renewable energy goals, the river is the best
15 alternative.

16 So what is it, and how does it work? This is the
17 cable. This is, like, a mini-scale replication that's
18 about 6 inches in diameter. It's actually a slice from
19 our Neptune Project that runs about 50 miles underwater
20 between New Jersey and New York. As you can see from
21 the left-hand photo, it is bundled. There's two of
22 these bundled together with a fiberoptic cable and --

23 MS. GRANTHAM: Chair, this is Ms. Grantham.
24 It's looking like our Internet might have crashed. So
25 I might want to say -- want to pause and probably redo

1 this slide once we get it back up.

2 Are we back up? Okay. Can you start back from
3 the beginning of this slide, please.

4 CHAIR BECKETT: Which slide, just to...

5 MR. HOCKER: Yeah. Which slide?

6 MS. GRANTHAM: The one that you're on right
7 now.

8 CHAIR BECKETT: Let's make sure it's -- I'm
9 sorry, Mr. Hocker. Let's just make -- give this just
10 one minute here. I see mine still...

11 And thank you, everyone, for your patience. Due
12 to modern world of -- both forms at once; so...

13 THE REPORTER: Chair, would you like to go
14 off the record?

15 CHAIR BECKETT: I can't hear you.

16 (Reporter clarification.)

17 CHAIR BECKETT: Sure.

18 (Break from 6:08 p.m. to 6:22 p.m.)

19 CHAIR BECKETT: Okay. Just for the quick
20 benefit of everyone in the room, part of the importance
21 of the online portion is to ensure that Council can
22 hear from you tonight too. And, ultimately, in this
23 world -- Council members have been present. Obviously,
24 we want the benefit of the full Council.

25 So thanks for your patience, and we will proceed

1 back with Mr. Hocker on the slide before us. So thanks
2 again, everyone, for your patience.

3 MR. HOCKER: All right. Thank you. We'll
4 start on this slide.

5 What you're seeing here -- first of all, at the
6 table is the actual diameter of the cable that can
7 carry 1,100 megawatts for 100 miles. The cable really
8 involves two cables that are bundled with a fiberoptic
9 cable. That's what is shown on the left-hand photo.

10 And as I've said, this is the type of project that
11 we have successfully developed and constructed. The
12 photo on the left is actually from our Neptune Project
13 showing the cable bundle being paid off the end -- the
14 bottom -- not the bottom -- the back of a ship, a
15 barge, and into the water, which we'll show on the next
16 slide.

17 How does it work? It does not involve mechanical
18 dredging. It does not involve leaving a scar on the
19 river bottom. What it does involve is a piece of
20 specialized machinery that is used in various places
21 around the world, which we have used, called a
22 Hydroplow or a jet plow.

23 The way it works is kind of depicted on the
24 right-hand figure. A ship or barge proceeds slowly in
25 the direction that it's going up or down the river.

1 The cable is on a turntable. You don't see it there,
2 but it's a very massive turntable carrying miles of
3 cable. It is paid off the back of the vessel as it
4 proceeds. It is threaded through the Hydroplow, which
5 is the white thing. And at the bottom of the Hydroplow
6 is a blade, very much like a plow blade except that it
7 contains a number of high pressure water jets. And the
8 water jets create a trench about 2 feet wide by
9 essentially emulsifying the sediment.

10 As the sediment rises within the trench, the cable
11 is simultaneously laid into the trench to the required
12 depth. Now, in this case, we believe the required
13 depth -- and this is a requirement of the agencies,
14 such as the Corps of Engineers -- would be a minimum of
15 10 feet and maybe 15 feet below the sediment. What
16 happens is that the sediment has risen up. The cable
17 is laid down. 75, give or take, percent of the
18 sediment lays back down within the trench.

19 So it's a simultaneous process. It moves very,
20 very slowly. The blade is adjustable. The water
21 pressure is adjustable. The whole thing is being
22 monitored during installation in realtime to determine
23 where it is and how deep it is at any given point.

24 Again, it's a proven process. We have used it
25 ourselves. The photo on the left simply shows kind of

1 what it looks like. And it doesn't look a whole a lot
2 different from a work barge that you might see on the
3 river right now with a work boat or two around it. And
4 as it moves slowly -- maximum maybe a mile and a half a
5 day -- that's what you would see. That's the only
6 visible aspect of it.

7 We talked about the interconnection points at
8 Big Eddy and in Portland in the Rivergate Industrial
9 area. I had said that there was no visible part of the
10 transmission line. The visible facilities are called
11 converter stations. And that's a photo of one here.
12 They are very similar, clearly, to what you would see
13 at a substation. Their purpose is to convert the
14 alternating current, or AC power, that comes in to
15 Big Eddy, convert it to direct current, or DC power, in
16 order to for it to be transported efficiently for a
17 long distance underwater.

18 It then goes to another converter station in
19 Portland where it is converted back from AC to DC
20 power -- I'm sorry -- DC to AC power. This particular
21 station is in Downtown San Francisco. There is a very
22 similar project that was not done by us called the
23 Trans Bay Cable that's been operating since about 2010.
24 It laid a high voltage cable, DC cable, under
25 San Francisco Bay. And there are two converter

1 stations. This one is in San Francisco. The other one
2 is very similar. It's in a town called Pittsburgh in
3 the East Bay.

4 This is a complex project. We know that. It
5 involves approvals from three major entities. One of
6 them is Washington EFSEC. Another is Oregon EFSC. And
7 the other is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which
8 has the control or approval process in waters of the
9 United States.

10 So we are in the process of submitting
11 applications to all three entities. We fully expect a
12 complete NEPA review. Hopefully, the state SEPA review
13 and the NEPA review will be handled in a coordinated
14 process. We need all these approvals. We can't just
15 put the line in Skamania County and hope for the best.

16 So that's the -- as I said, it's a complex
17 approval process that is being undertaken here, and it
18 involves a great deal of environmental studies and
19 description, most of which was included in the
20 application that was submitted to State of Washington.
21 And we fully expect that there will be following
22 questions from EFSEC that we will answer.

23 We've been trying to encourage a highly
24 coordinated process. And we think that's what it's
25 going to be. We certainly hope so. We also meet

1 interconnection agreements with the BPA and with
2 Portland General since Portland General owns the
3 western interconnection point, Harborton.

4 And as I said, there's a number of studies that
5 we've either completed or are underway that talk about
6 things like biological assessments, endangered species,
7 sediment transport, which is -- what happens to the
8 portion of the sediment that has risen out of the
9 trench? How far does it go? What sort of impacts does
10 it have? Are there contaminants in it? Virtually any
11 question you can think of is going to be asked and
12 answered.

13 We have conducted a geophysical survey of the
14 river bottom so that we have a pretty good idea of
15 where the cable can go and where it can't go.
16 Physically, there are a number of features of the river
17 that would make it difficult if not impossible to
18 employ a Hydroplow. However, in the route that we have
19 selected, we believe it is constructible based on the
20 studies that we have done.

21 Just to mention -- several of the considerations
22 we have employed from the beginning are to stay away
23 from the shoreline because that's a historically
24 culturally sensitive area; to stay away from sensitive
25 habitat areas; to, as much as possible, stay away from

1 the navigation channel. So -- and to stay away from
2 physical constraints such as steep side slopes or rock
3 formations or that kind of thing in the river.

4 Where are we now? Well, as you know, we have
5 submitted our application to Washington. We are in the
6 process of submitting a comparable application to
7 Oregon. Actually, the Oregon application is pretty
8 extensive, and it's being completed and submitted. We
9 have submitted -- there's actually -- when we talk
10 about an Army Corps permit, there's actually kind of a
11 series of permits that involve use of federal
12 facilities and -- as well as the environmental permit
13 called Section 404. And part of that process includes
14 extensive consultation led by the Army Corps with the
15 federally recognized Native Tribes.

16 So the Army Corps is conducting that. They have
17 to as the lead agency. But as I said before, we are
18 taking steps to directly engage with the Indian Tribes
19 but with the full knowledge that at the end of the day,
20 the consultation process belongs to the Army Corps, not
21 us.

22 We do expect that there will be benefits to the
23 communities that we pass through. We certainly know
24 from experience that construction and installation,
25 which should take about three and a half years, will

1 provide a great many construction jobs. This is
2 primarily for the converter stations but also in
3 support of the in-water installation.

4 And before I forget, the in-river installation
5 will take place during the winter months, probably over
6 two seasons within agency-specified work windows that
7 are designed to allow that kind of construction. And
8 this applies to many kinds of in-water construction,
9 not just us, to avoid spawning and migration periods
10 and that kind of thing. So they're pretty narrow
11 windows.

12 We do expect that the communities that we
13 affect -- that we will be open to providing community
14 benefits. We have in the past with our existing
15 projects. That could be just amenities to the
16 community. Could be property taxes for the on-land
17 cable. It could take any number of forms. And, you
18 know, we certainly don't believe that we can do this
19 without acknowledging any impacts that might take
20 place.

21 Similarly, we fully expect that there will be a
22 mitigation program, primarily associated with cultural
23 considerations in the river, and are engaging with the
24 Tribes, again, through the Corps or in partnership with
25 the Corps to flesh those out.

1 There's kind of a side benefit, which is that if
2 in fact -- right now, significant renewable energy east
3 of the Cascades, there's no point in building it
4 because you can't get it to where the power's needed.
5 So hopefully this project, along with others, will help
6 open up that -- those pathways to go east to west and
7 allow those planned and intended solar, wind, battery
8 storage, that kind of project to go forward. And, of
9 course, those are all subject to their own permitting
10 requirements and all the rest of it. But to the extent
11 they go forward, those will also provide community
12 benefits to those communities -- construction jobs,
13 that kind of thing.

14 So with that, it is a team that is helping to
15 develop this project. PowerBridge is the lead
16 developer. One of our partners is NextEra Energy,
17 which is a major utility and renewable energy provider
18 in the U.S. It's publicly held. We have some NextEra
19 folks here, and they're the ones that currently own and
20 operate the Trans Bay Cable under San Francisco Bay
21 that I talked about before.

22 So with that, I think I'll mention -- because some
23 of these -- you know what? Let's go to the slide.
24 There we go. Just to quickly describe our experience,
25 the Neptune Project was completed in 2007. It provides

1 25 percent average of all the electricity used on
2 Long Island. So it's a very fair significant to --
3 contributor to Long Island. It runs about 24/7. It
4 runs probably 90 -- 95, 98 percent of the time and has
5 run successfully for 18 years.

6 The Hudson Project came a little later. Completed
7 in 2013; so it's only 12 years old. And it links the
8 power grids in New Jersey and New York. It was
9 installed in the Hudson River under a permitting
10 process that is very similar to what we're describing
11 here where you have both states, New York and
12 New Jersey, and the Army Corps of Engineers come
13 together in a coordinated fashion to go through the
14 studies and the requirements and finally issue
15 approvals.

16 So with that -- and I think I should mention I
17 checked that this slide presentation is available, I
18 believe -- and if it isn't, it will be -- online
19 through the EFSEC website. So if I went through it too
20 fast, which I probably did, and you want to go look at
21 it again and then send questions to us, there's a
22 website, Cascade Renewable -- did I get that right?
23 Yeah -- cascaderenewable.com where there's a mechanism
24 that you can ask questions. And please do. We want to
25 be open. We want to be transparent. As I keep saying,

1 we've done this before and understand how important it
2 is for people to understand what the process is, how it
3 works, what the impacts are and are not. And, you
4 know, we want to, you know, provide whatever
5 information we can to answer questions.

6 And with that, thank you.

7 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you very much,
8 Mr. Hocker. Appreciate that overview. And trying to
9 just get my camera on for folks when -- kind of going
10 to each next section for online audience.

11 So with this, we are going to move into public
12 comment. And generally we operate on a
13 three-minutes-per-person basis, and we appreciate your
14 understanding and respect to that. Certainly, we try
15 to make sure there's enough time for everybody. And if
16 you have questions, you're welcome to submit them
17 including here tonight before the mic. Know that this
18 isn't necessarily by design to be -- you know,
19 answering all those questions tonight. If I think that
20 we have time and there's an ability to answer kind of,
21 you know, the quicker questions or just capture
22 opportunity in the moment, I certainly, as Chair,
23 support that. Perhaps that's something we might
24 consider at the end after we've finished questions and
25 comments for the record.

1 Again, the purpose of this is to help inform what
2 the EFSEC Staff as well as the Council -- who
3 ultimately, you know, sits as a body and oversees what
4 should go into a Site Certificate Agreement and whether
5 or not there should be one; so that's not obviously a
6 given. But ultimately, your input tonight and
7 throughout the process -- but this is the beginning.
8 And so where you have questions or comments that should
9 be considered throughout, that's why we're here tonight
10 for this portion.

11 The next portion that we'll speak to in a little
12 more detail, again, is specific to land use and how
13 that relates to land use here in Klickitat County and
14 other lands. There will be a short presentation on the
15 specific slice of the project within this particular
16 county.

17 So with that context, Ms. Grantham will help me
18 call on these who have already signed up. And if you
19 have not, you certainly are welcome to comment tonight.
20 If you want to sign up, I believe in the back there's
21 also a box for written comments in addition to the
22 other means, both online and email, phone, and mail,
23 et cetera.

24 And if -- once we get through the initial list,
25 you know, if you've changed your mind or a thought came

1 and you want to raise your hand, I'll certainly call on
2 you. When you come forward, if you'd just state your
3 name clearly for the record. But actually, if you
4 do -- our staff, who ultimately maintain this record,
5 please spell your name for them. We'd certainly
6 appreciate that. And then we will start the clock
7 after that introduction and spelling of your name. So
8 you'll have a full three minutes for your comments.

9 With that, Ms. Grantham.

10 MS. GRANTHAM: Certainly, Chair. The first
11 person I have signed up is Fred Greef.

12 MR. GREEF: Thank you for this opportunity.
13 Did you say you want me to spell my name?

14 CHAIR BECKETT: I think if you signed in,
15 you're probably okay. But could you help us sort of --
16 someone could come forward and help with the mic if
17 need be.

18 MR. GREEF: I might have turned it off.

19 CHAIR BECKETT: Well, I think you're -- maybe
20 you just have to get a little closer.

21 MS. GRANTHAM: And this is Ms. Grantham. I
22 can confirm that we already have Fred's name spelling;
23 so we --

24 CHAIR BECKETT: Okay. So you can just
25 proceed. You've pre-signed up; so you --

1 MR. GREEF: So you have the spelling for my
2 name?

3 CHAIR BECKETT: You do not -- just -- you may
4 begin when you're ready there.

5 MR. GREEF: Okay.

6 One thing I would like to say is that there was
7 very little public notice of these meetings. The --
8 and there's very few people commenting because nobody
9 knew about this and nobody's here, and that was the
10 same thing in Stevenson. And it is a little curious to
11 me that there's no meetings in Oregon or Portland or --
12 anyway, I assume that this is going to be an EIS.
13 Can't imagine it wouldn't be with the significance of
14 this project. But I do have a few suggestions for the
15 SEPA responsible official at EFSEC before they -- to be
16 sure that they make that determination. And I think
17 I'll have a lot more input once the scoping starts
18 but...

19 There's -- so SEPA -- Washington State SEPA
20 Rule 197-11-0800 [sic] "Incomplete or unavailable
21 information," there's a whole lot of that associated
22 with this proposal. And "agencies shall obtain" --
23 when there's "information on significant adverse
24 impacts essential to a reasoned choice among
25 alternatives is not" -- when that information is -- "is

1 not known and the costs are not exorbitant, agencies
2 shall include the information in their environmental
3 documents."

4 Now, if the impacts are unknown and they don't
5 choose to spend the money, then they have to assume
6 worst-case possible impacts in those cases, and so the
7 EIS definitely has to look at all the worst-case
8 impacts. But again, this may be more related to the
9 scoping, which comes next, but that's a very important
10 part of SEPA analysis. And you must -- so impacts that
11 are unknown but possibly very significant, those really
12 do have to be looked at as worst-case.

13 Another thing on the SEPA, on the threshold
14 determination of significance or non-significance --
15 significant -- so under SEPA, significant adverse
16 impacts in one location may not be the same as in
17 another location. And PowerBridge talked about Neptune
18 and Hudson Projects in New York, in Long Island, in
19 New Jersey, Hudson River. That is so different than
20 what we have here. We have a world-class area that
21 still has wild fish and so many -- so much beauty and
22 majesty here that -- the health of the fish --
23 there's...

24 Trees are gone in Long Island. And the whales
25 were gone early with the whaling in Connecticut. We

1 have issues here that are just completely 100 percent
2 night-and-day different that really do have to be
3 carefully looked at here. Because we still have a very
4 precious land with values that should not be allowed to
5 have further cumulative adverse impacts to the fish
6 here.

7 CHAIR BECKETT: And, Mr. Greef, appreciate if
8 you could try and wrap up your comments.

9 MR. GREEF: Okay.

10 CHAIR BECKETT: We had allowed some extra
11 time for you last night. And appreciate you being here
12 tonight but --

13 MR. GREEF: Well, I'm just going to drop it
14 at that. But there are some significant impacts here
15 that have to be addressed, and I hope that the
16 determination of significance is made with this
17 proposal.

18 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

19 MS. GRANTHAM: Next speaker is Amber Carter.

20 MS. CARTER: Thank you.

21 Mr. Chairman and members of the Council, my name
22 is Amber Carter, spelled A-m-b-e-r; Carter,
23 C-a-r-t-e-r. And I'm here on behalf of the
24 Columbia River Steamship Operators Association.

25 We're here to express concerns regarding the

1 proposed transmission line that involves multiple
2 crossings through the Columbia River Federal Navigation
3 Channel. This critical waterway is essential to our
4 regional economy and to our members who depend on its
5 uninterrupted, safe, and efficient operation. Our
6 members include shipowners, operators, agents, launch
7 service, towing and bunkering, as well as facilities
8 and ports along the river system.

9 The Columbia River trade corridor is the lifeblood
10 of our regional economy and facilitates the movement of
11 over 51 million metric tons of cargo at a value of over
12 \$25.3 billion in 2023 dollars and supports over 40,000
13 local jobs. Disruption to navigability of this
14 important waterway could result in substantial economic
15 and operational consequences, especially for industries
16 reliant on this cost-effective transportation route.

17 Our concerns include transfer -- transmission line
18 depth and dredging, the lack of risk assessment, and
19 mitigation planning. And we're also troubled by the
20 lack of public engagement with maritime during the
21 project planning stages.

22 We have submitted written comments that expand on
23 these points further. But to conclude, we respectfully
24 ask that EFSEC require additional information in its
25 project review on how Cascade Renewable Transmission

1 plans to mitigate these operational and safety
2 challenges. Thank you.

3 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

4 MS. GRANTHAM: Next speaker is Dave Berger.

5 MR. BERGER: Hi. My ear's plugged; so if I'm
6 too loud or too soft, let me know. Okay?

7 CHAIR BECKETT: I'll do.

8 MR. BERGER: Okay.

9 So regarding this project, I worked with
10 engineering students for a long time. And we we're
11 doing a project in Africa on trying to provide safe
12 drinking water to villages in their -- in -- there are
13 people living in huts and thatched-roof houses. And so
14 my thinking was, "Wow, let's put in a treatment
15 system." Because that was what I was taught to do.
16 But instead, my students said, "Hey, let's change the
17 roof and get cleaner water off the roof, and whatever
18 treatment we do will be a lot better."

19 So when I look at this and I think, "Oh, we're
20 going to take all this solar energy and put it in
21 Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon and transport
22 with a big power line underground to Portland," my head
23 scratches, and I go, "Why don't -- put the panels on
24 the roofs in Portland?"

25 So an alternative that should be looked at -- and

1 I know EISs look at -- even a "no action"
2 alternative -- should be the action alternative of
3 putting in solar panels over panel -- Vancouver and
4 Portland if that's the intent, to get solar energy to
5 those people. And it might create a hell of a lot more
6 jobs and be a lot, lot, lot, lot cheaper. Okay? So
7 that's one thought.

8 The other thought is -- is this really about
9 getting solar energy to people? Or is it about getting
10 it to data centers and people -- you know, big
11 investors with AI? So that's sort of a question that
12 comes in my mind.

13 Now, having spent a lot of time working on river
14 water quality, another issue that comes up to me is, of
15 course, re-entrainment. And there's a lot of stuff
16 down in that river, and the river is different from
17 place to place. And there's a lot of toxics, and that
18 stuff needs to be looked at really closely. And on top
19 of that, we're having tremendous problems in the river
20 that are impacting Native American fishermen with
21 algae. And with toxic algae now, all over -- I've
22 sampled for toxic algae in four places, and every place
23 I sampled, I found it.

24 So how is all this upheaval going to affect
25 nutrients and going to affect water quality in the

1 future? And once you bring it up, it comes down, and
2 it flows all the way -- flows all the way, all the way
3 to the ocean.

4 So all this stuff is going to happen in one place.
5 It's a dynamic system. You're affecting the largest
6 break on the West Coast that -- to the Pacific Ocean
7 between San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound. So it's
8 really a critical thing to look at the ecosystem in a
9 very deep way. And I want to thank you for the time.

10 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

11 MS. GRANTHAM: Next person is Deana Chase.

12 CHAIR BECKETT: And I think --

13 MS. CHASE: It's really tall. Oh, now I
14 broke it. Can I just hold it? Okay. It's Deana.
15 It's just Deana. Deana Chase. Simple. Sounds fancy
16 when you say it but...

17 So "Osiyo" and "Wado, gadugi." Welcome to our
18 land. My concern is your lack of Native people here.
19 You say that you're working with Native Tribes. It --
20 Corps of Engineers, you know, they're a federal agency.
21 They -- they're not a sovereign nation. You have an
22 obligation to sovereign nations. There are four
23 River Treaty Tribes. There are several Tribes that are
24 historically recognized that you are obligated to work
25 with and not just consult -- they are the consultants.

1 So that is my concern. That there -- there are no
2 native.

3 I don't know. Raise your hand if you're native.
4 Is that -- are there any Native Tribes here? No.
5 Okay. So -- and while I'm a Cherokee citizen, I do
6 work with and ally with a lot of the Four River Treaty
7 Tribes here. I'm appalled that there are no
8 representation of Native Tribes here. So that is my
9 biggest concern.

10 These waters that you say -- they're sacred.
11 Water, air. You're -- you want to put this
12 transmission line through a sacred place. There's
13 nothing more sacred than water. There's nothing more
14 sacred than water. Water is life. The air we breathe.
15 That doesn't just mean Tribal people. That means you.
16 That means your family. That means your next
17 generations. We're talking about all of our
18 granddaughters and grandsons that will have to live
19 with this. And we're already recovering from tons of
20 environmental mishaps that have happened in the name of
21 progress.

22 I just think I'm going to stop there. Consult
23 your Tribes, your sovereign nations. The Army Corps of
24 Engineers is not a sovereign nation. They work for and
25 with sovereign nations. You need Tribal leadership

1 here before you make another move. I think that's
2 where I'll finish.

3 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

4 MS. GRANTHAM: Next I have is Mitch Patton.
5 Mitch Patton, I see that you're online. You're up
6 next.

7 Chair, would you like me to move on to the next
8 person?

9 MR. PATTON: Can you hear me?

10 MS. GRANTHAM: Yes, we can.

11 MR. PATTON: Yeah. My mic wasn't turning on.

12 Yeah. This is Mitch Patton. I just found out
13 today about this meeting and the other meetings that
14 were held; so it's kind of hard to put anything really,
15 basically, together other than the fact that getting
16 the information out to the public seems to be a big
17 failure at this point.

18 I'm on the RAB board at Bradford Island as well.
19 And that's one of our biggest failures that we have
20 there is getting the community involved or getting the
21 community the information that they need to know with
22 what's going on at that Superfund site. And now we
23 have this submarine line going in on the bottom of the
24 river. And it's inside the NSA. There's multiple
25 things wrong with this whole transmission line that's

1 wanting to go in the river. The bottom, we know, is
2 contaminated. We've known that for years. And sending
3 a submarine line down to the bottom of that to disturb
4 it just seems like really reckless and -- danger to me
5 to do something like that.

6 And I am going to submit written public comment,
7 but I thought of -- at least get the time to say that
8 we need to -- we, the public, need to know more about
9 what's going on with this thing. It seems like it's
10 kind of coming through pretty quickly with very little
11 public input being said on it. And, again, the Tribes
12 need to -- I mean, they have a lot to say about this,
13 and I think we need more information from them.

14 And the other thing that kind of popped into my
15 mind was -- we have some representations -- like,
16 Skamania County has a representative. And I don't know
17 if Clark County does or Klickitat does, but I'm
18 wondering why those representatives maybe didn't make a
19 little more effort in getting that information out to
20 the public that these meetings were going to be held.
21 So we kind of need to work on that as well. And that
22 kind of falls back onto the whole -- the whole thing of
23 getting information out to people just -- it's a
24 failure. Whatever you're doing is not working.

25 And I'm going to probably step aside right now

1 with that because there's so many questions that are
2 unanswered. I guess the other thing is -- that I fear
3 mostly is -- if we do the written comment, which
4 basically sometimes goes to a dead-end street, some of
5 the Council will read it, but the rest of the public
6 can't read that public comment.

7 As our County commissioners did, they changed the
8 written comment from the meeting packets to -- you have
9 to do a public records request now to receive any
10 written public comment. And I really truly hope that
11 isn't the case with what you guys have going on here
12 because you can't make a public records request on
13 information that you don't know is out there.

14 So hopefully you'll be transparent with the public
15 comments and let all the public see it. And like I
16 said, I will do my written public comment and hopefully
17 the rest of the public will be able to see it. So
18 thank you for your time.

19 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

20 And given a process question, let me -- as also
21 posted in the chat -- thank you, Ms. Grantham -- the
22 comments do go to the public website. They are public
23 facing. So please know that when you submit them,
24 both -- they'll be out there. And if that gives you
25 any concern, then know that they will be out there;

1 so...

2 Ms. Grantham?

3 MS. GRANTHAM: Thank you, Chair. The next
4 person I have is Nathan Baker.

5 MR. BAKER: Good evening, Chair Beckett and
6 members of the Council. I'm Nathan Baker, senior staff
7 attorney with Friends of the Columbia Gorge. And I
8 will be focusing tonight on two procedural issues with
9 this hearing. These issues will be familiar to you
10 because I brought them up each night. But this is a
11 separate hearing in a different county; so I must raise
12 these issues again.

13 The first issue is that this hearing is premature.
14 The duty to conduct an informational public hearing is
15 triggered by, quote, "the receipt of an application for
16 site certification," end quote. That's RCW A.50.090,
17 subsection 1. EFSEC has not yet received an
18 application. It has only received a draft application,
19 and draft applications don't count.

20 Last night at the Skamania County Land Use
21 Consistency Hearing, the Applicant's attorney,
22 Mr. McMahan, conceded that the document submitted is
23 only a draft application. He then declined to explain
24 why they only submitted a draft application,
25 specifically whether they submitted a draft application

1 by mistake or whether this was deliberate. Perhaps,
2 for example, if they were trying to obtain a specific
3 vesting date for land use consistency purposes.

4 I suppose I agree with Mr. McMahan -- the reason
5 or reasons why the Applicant submitted a mere draft
6 application don't matter. But I do find it a bit odd
7 that the Applicant is very deliberately withholding an
8 explanation about why they have pursued this course of
9 conduct. At any rate, regardless of the motivation,
10 the legal result is the same. EFSEC's required
11 procedures are not triggered and cannot be triggered by
12 draft applications.

13 Thus, this hearing tonight and all other hearings
14 this week are premature. If and when an actual
15 non-draft application is submitted, that will trigger
16 the need to hold the hearings required by the plain
17 language of the statute.

18 The second issue involves Council membership. For
19 tonight's hearings, the membership of the Council must
20 include a member appointed by Klickitat County.
21 Contrary to what the Applicant's attorney said at last
22 night's land use hearing, the Council plays no role in
23 that appointment, and there is no discretion involved.
24 Rather, the statute says that the Klickitat County
25 commissioners quote, "shall appoint," end quote, a

1 voting member of the Council. And that person quote,
2 "shall sit with the Council," end quote, for both
3 hearings tonight.

4 During EFSEC's monthly meeting earlier today,
5 EFSEC officials confirmed that Klickitat County has not
6 yet made an appointment to that council. And for that
7 matter, neither has Clark County nor the cities of
8 North Bonneville and Stevenson. In fact, it appears
9 that EFSEC has not even yet invited these local
10 governments about the need to make their appointments.
11 Instead, EFSEC Staff have only stated these governments
12 receive notifications about the hearings and about the
13 fact that the draft application was received. Holding
14 this hearing without the participation of a Council
15 member appointed by Klickitat County violates this
16 statute.

17 In conclusion, if and when the Applicant submits a
18 non-draft final application, EFSEC will then need to
19 schedule informational public hearings in each of the
20 three counties, and the Klickitat County appointee to
21 the Council will need to sit with the Council for the
22 Klickitat County informational and land use consistency
23 public hearings. Thank you very much.

24 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

25 MS. GRANTHAM: The next speaker I have is

1 Eric Wriston.

2 MR. WRISTON: Thank. You. And good evening,
3 Council. My name is Eric Wriston. I am an attorney at
4 Crag Law Center. I'm here representing
5 Columbia Riverkeeper. I just want to quickly emphasize
6 that Columbia Riverkeeper shares and adopts the
7 procedural issues that Friends of The Gorge has raised
8 tonight and in the prior informational meetings. Those
9 include both the objection to starting this process on
10 the submission of a draft application as opposed to a
11 complete application like the statute requires as well
12 as the lack of local appointees to the Council in all
13 of these hearings.

14 And I want to elaborate just a little bit on the
15 draft application issue. Because it's not just some
16 technical legal issue that we're raising. It's a real
17 problem. The draft application that was submitted is
18 missing a remarkable amount of the information that's
19 required to be in an application by Washington
20 Administrative Code Chapter 463-60.

21 For example, the applicant is supposed to include
22 detailed fish and wildlife and habitat surveys in the
23 application, but we don't have anything even resembling
24 that for the in-river portions of this project. No
25 surveys, mapping, or description of the habitat

1 characteristics of the parts of river that this project
2 will run through. Likewise, they're supposed to
3 include detailed information on soils and topography.
4 But as the Applicant has admitted last night, soil
5 studies are something they are still planning on doing
6 but have not done yet.

7 The list goes on and on. And Riverkeeper will be
8 submitting a separate letter regarding all of the ways
9 that this application is incomplete. But the bottom
10 line here is that there are serious public process
11 issues with moving forward with the application at this
12 time. The public has a right to comment on an
13 application that is at least substantially complete.
14 The draft application that has been submitted is far
15 from that, and the draft application makes full
16 participation in this process impossible.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight.

18 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

19 MS. GRANTHAM: Chair, this concludes the list
20 of people that I have.

21 CHAIR BECKETT: Okay. Thank you. And I
22 don't know if we can dial my mic down or -- I'm getting
23 a lot of feedback. So I'll turn it on, but I don't
24 want to blow people's ears out here. Thank you.

25 Are there other members of the public here who

1 wish to speak? I see hand with white hat first, and
2 then -- and then, I'm sorry, ma'am. We'll take you
3 next. Again, please come forward and...

4 MR. WISHERD: Tom Wisherd, W-i-s-h-e-r-d.
5 I'm with Local 701, operating engineers --

6 (Reporter requests clarification.)

7 MR. WISHERD: -- just under 4,000 members.
8 We're for this project. With the trades, we all have
9 the state-of-the-art facilities, and you'll get best of
10 the best. Thank you much.

11 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

12 And if -- ma'am, you're next. Welcome.

13 MS. REUTER: My name is Kalama Reuter. I
14 live in White Salmon, and I wanted to --

15 CHAIR BECKETT: Could you spell -- spell your
16 name, please.

17 MS. REUTER: K-a-l-a-m-a, first name; last
18 name, Reuter, R-e-u-t-e-r.

19 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you.

20 MS. REUTER: And I wanted to ask a question.
21 I heard two depths that the cable would go. First I
22 heard 40 feet; it would be deep, deep. Then, when the
23 hydro "thingy majiggy" was doing its thing, it sounded
24 like it would be 10 to 15 feet deep. This is a big
25 river. 10 or 15 feet of a plowed up area might not

1 stay covered. It's a moving -- this is a massive being
2 who's moving, and I have concerns about that.

3 The other thing that I noticed, and I'm not -- I'm
4 not -- I do take notes, but I can't get everything.
5 That it looked like there's an expedited way that you
6 can avoid an environmental impact statement. In my
7 limited understanding of being at various hearings,
8 they're -- the scoping comes with the environmental
9 impact. I don't -- I'm not sure. But if you do the
10 expedited thing, you cut that out. It was sort of
11 there in the fine print over on the side. "No
12 environmental impact statement needed."

13 So I have big concerns about that. Thank you.

14 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you. And I do see a
15 couple other hands. Again, process question -- let me
16 just quickly speak to it. The EFSEC presentation just
17 noted that that is one of the processes. Which process
18 will be determined has not even remotely been decided,
19 including, as was noted earlier, scoping is to come and
20 things like that. So it does exist, but it doesn't
21 mean that that's what will be used here; so...

22 Next hand. Please come forward. Thank you.

23 MS. DECENT: Hi, I'm Jennifer Decent, and
24 that's D-e-c-e-n-t. I'm with LIUNA Local 335. We are
25 the laborers, if you don't know what LIUNA stands for.

1 For increased economic development and
2 opportunities, we need more transmission lines and
3 resilience. As laborers, we live and work in these
4 communities; so we care about the environmental impact
5 to our beautiful backyard. So when I read about the
6 process of burying the line having minimal impact to
7 the riverbed as it is buried in silt, which recovers
8 quickly, that seemed to be an environmentally friendly
9 alternative to me. As Washingtonians, we have very
10 high standards. And I realize this is in the very
11 beginning of the process; so I look forward to the
12 following -- this project and its process.

13 Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you. Any others in the
15 room tonight who would speak? Please. And then I'll
16 make one next last call for the -- yeah, please come
17 forward. I was just going to let our online audience
18 know, if there's anyone else who wishes to speak, if
19 you'd please raise your hand online. And then soon we
20 will conclude this portion of the meeting and move to
21 our land use consistency. But please, thank you.

22 MR. NICHOLS: Thank you. I'm Rodger Nichols,
23 R-o-d-g-e-r N-i-c-h-o-l-s.

24 And as a member working with the Goldendale
25 licensed radio station, I was surprised the only way I

1 found out about this was because I had a Google alert
2 set on my Google. And that's how I found out about
3 this yesterday. I was able to get a little bit on the
4 radio station today this afternoon, but it's kind of
5 late in the process. So if you're going to have
6 meetings that take place in a county, you want to have
7 all the media involved.

8 I also work with the Goldendale Sentinel. I
9 really appreciate -- I'll be doing a story about this,
10 but I would be really appreciating if we had more
11 notice on this, and I'm taking notice of all the
12 comments as well this evening.

13 I also want to suggest that there's an agency
14 you've not talked about yet, and that's the
15 Columbia River Gorge Commission. You have two sections
16 of the proposed line that are not going to be in the
17 water that are going to be on the ground that are going
18 to disturb the ground. And they will -- and they are
19 in the National Scenic Area. At least part of -- part
20 of the station near Big Eddy will not be inside
21 The Dalles city boundary -- and also the loop that goes
22 around the end that Skamania County will be on. And
23 the Columbia River Gorge Commission is a land use
24 agency, and those approvals will be needed as well. So
25 you might want to put that on your chart. Thank you.

1 CHAIR BECKETT: Thank you very much.

2 Any last hands in the room? Okay. We will
3 proceed. Any hands online? Ms. Grantham, I don't see
4 any but -- okay.

5 Then I will call this opening hearing to
6 conclusion at 7:12 p.m., and we will move into our land
7 use consistency hearing.

8 (Proceedings adjourned at 7:12 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF SHORTHAND REPORTER

STATE OF OREGON)
) ss.
COUNTY OF MULTNOMAH)

This is to certify that I, Stephanie C. Rhinehart, a Washington Certified Court Reporter, Oregon Certified Shorthand Reporter, and Registered Professional Reporter reported by stenographic means the within and foregoing proceedings; that said proceedings were taken before me on the date herein set forth and that I was authorized to and did report said proceedings.

I further certify that the foregoing transcript is a full, true, and correct record of the proceedings to the best of my ability; that said proceedings were taken by me stenographically and thereafter reduced to typewriting under my supervision; and that I am neither a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties this action and have no financial interest in its outcome.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 5th day of December, 2025.

/s/Stephanie C. Rhinehart, RPR
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