



November 19, 2025

Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
P.O. Box 43172
Olympia, WA 98503-3172

Subject: Public Comment on Proposed Linear Transmission Line from The Dalles to Portland, Oregon

Dear Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of Tidewater Barge Lines to express our serious concerns regarding the proposed linear transmission line project from The Dalles to Portland, Oregon. As a key operator on the Columbia and Snake River systems, we are deeply invested in ensuring the safety and navigability of these vital waterways.

The proposed alignment within the Columbia River, from approximately river mile 190 near The Dalles to approximately river mile 106 near Portland, raises several significant issues.

Our primary concerns are as follows:

1. **Impact on River Navigation:** The proposed project appears to pose a risk to safe navigation, particularly in narrow or shallow sections of the river where large vessels, including loaded tows and cruise ships, may face difficulty maneuvering around construction activities. The presence of a cable-laying vessel and associated support equipment in the river could create slow-moving hazards, especially in areas where the channel is constrained by depth.
2. **Project Schedule:** It is unclear whether this project is seasonal or will take place year-round. The absence of a detailed schedule raises concerns about the potential for extended disruption to river traffic, particularly during peak navigation periods.
3. **Details on Construction Equipment:** We would like to know more about the size and specifications of the cable-laying vessel and the extent of support equipment that will be on the water, including buoys, small craft, and materials barges. Understanding these details is crucial for assessing the potential impact on navigation.
4. **Vessel Maneuverability:** Will the cable-laying vessel be capable of moving to allow safe passage in tight areas, particularly in the event of encountering downbound loaded tows or other large vessels?
5. **Hydroplowing Concerns:** The proposal to hydroplow down 10 feet below the mudline to lay the cable is another significant concern. How does the Cascade Renewable Transmission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to mitigate the disruption to navigation during this process? Additionally, will yearly maintenance dredging activities still be permitted up to Bonneville following the completion of this project?
6. **Consideration of Alternative Alignments:** We urge the Corps to consider placing the transmission line outside of the navigation channel altogether. If the channel must be used, what justifications exist for this choice, and what measures will be taken to minimize risks to navigation?

If this project moves forward and given the potential impacts on our operations and the broader river community, we request detailed information on the anticipated navigation impacts and the plans to address and mitigate them. As river operators, we also request a place in the planning process, both to ensure our operational questions are addressed and to share the operational perspective only river operators can provide.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns and our request for involvement in the planning work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Johan Sperling'.

Johan Sperling
President & CEO, Tidewater

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