

From: [EFSEC mi Rule Making](#)
To: [EFSEC mi Comments](#)
Subject: FW: Battery Energy Storage System Facility Community Concern
Date: Monday, October 28, 2024 10:46:42 AM
Attachments: [Skagit County Commissioners Oppose Goldeneye BESS Project.pdf](#)

Forwarding from rulemaking email to comments email.

Ali Smith (She/They)
Management Analyst 3
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC)
[EFSEC Home](#) | [About EFSEC](#)

From: Zindra Nelson <zindra@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 26, 2024 10:40 PM
To: EFSEC mi Rule Making <RuleMaking@efsec.wa.gov>
Subject: Battery Energy Storage System Facility Community Concern

External Email

To Whom it May Concern:

I strongly oppose any BESS sites in Skagit County, and strongly support a long term moritorium against them for our citizens and our farmland.

I also oppose any rulemaking that would silence public comment.

On 9/4/24, I went to the Sedro Woolley City Council Meeting and spoke against it, along with many other community members. As someone who attends Inspire Church in Sedro Woolley on Township, as well as being someone who runs/participates in 2 homeschool programs that meet there, I believe BESS, Project Goldeneye, is a serious concern to our community.

At the City Council meeting, the City Council brought in four members from the Tenaska Company to do a presentation. While they were able to walk us all through a powerpoint, when asked direct questions, they could answer one questions directly. (Link to video below.)

Before a different public meeting in August, they issued letters to those who live within a one mile radius of the PSE Sedro substation - saying that they need to be able to evacuate within 3 minutes of a fire at the plant at any moment. Inspire Church is close to that substation and the planned build site.

As someone who attends Inspire where there are hundreds of attenders, and as someone who feels responsible for the 325 people that are registered and in attendance at Friday School weekly, I am concerned about evacuation as well as shelter in place orders. There is no way that we could evacuate 325 people from the 2 buildings with 3-5 minutes. Which means we would need to shelter in place.

I stated when I spoke at the meeting, that we (as Friday School, First Class Skagit County Homeschool Coop) are not trained for that type of emergency, we don't have the type of supplies needed, and we don't have the means to prepare for this type of emergency especially since we do not receive public school funding. I have no idea where Inspire Church would stand on that type of preparedness. At the meeting, when we asked the representatives from Tenaska directly about evacuation plans, they said have no plan in place. They plan on supplying that information once the need in the process requires it, which is not

good enough.

As far as shelter in place goes, I've read some on what that entails. But exposure is what caught me off guard. If exposed to the gas from one of these fires, you are to dispose of your clothing. You are to cut your shirt off, do not take it off over your head. According to the CDC's website, if exposed to the gas, if it gets in your eyes, you could go blind. If it gets on your skin - severe burns/blisters within 24 hours. If you breathe it in, you could drown from your lungs filling with water. If exposed you are to seek immediate medical treatment. Exposure can be fatal.

The following were at the SW City Council meeting, and went on the record as opposing the project:

The Sedro Woolley City Council

The Upper Skagit Tribe

The people of Skagit County (about 400 public present from what we could tell)

The Port of Skagit

All three Skagit County Commissioners were in attendance, 2 spoke. Attached is the press release.

I personally spoke with everyone on the City Council after the meeting. No one wants it in Sedro Woolley. The Council feels like the state will try to push it through regardless. The community of Skagit County is planning on fighting it.

Below are links with further information on the topic. News Coverage. The link to the video Council meeting (you could listen to the companies presentation). Articles on Lithium Battery fires. Information/overview of the goldeneye project. CDC information on health if exposed.

Skagit Valley Herald's Coverage on the City Council Meeting:

https://www.goskagit.com/news/business/city-council-joins-in-opposing-battery-storage-facility/article_8bff2e88-6b93-11ef-a907-8fe27aa1603e.html

Replay of the SW City Council meeting on 9/4/24 where there was a presentation as well as public comment:

<https://sedrowoolleywa.portal.civicclerk.com/event/184/media>

Here is information on the project:

<https://www.efsec.wa.gov/energy-facilities/goldeneye-bess>

<https://www.efsec.wa.gov/energy-facilities/goldeneye-bess/goldeneye-bess-application>

The overview advertising website for the project:

<https://goldeneyeenergystorage.com/>

The facebook group Stewards of Skagit County #STOPBESS with 2000 Skagit County members:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1054570489577476>

News - Battery Storage Fire (BESS) Fire Coverage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTeDqvK8iX4>

https://www.theepochtimes.com/us/renewable-energy-battery-facility-catches-fire-in-san-diego-county-5719497?c=share_pos3&pid=iOS_app_share

<https://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/lithium-ion-battery-fire-in-escondido-prompts-large-response/3615328/>

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/2024/06/20/fire-in-otay-mesa-puts-battery-storage-projects-under-scrutiny/>

News - Article talks about BESS in WA/Oregon - specifically Sedro:

<https://washingtonstatestandard.com/2024/09/05/battery-farms-the-energy-industrys-new-darling-line-up-to-enter-pacific-nw/>

News - Here is King 5 News coverage:

<https://www.king5.com/video/news/local/opposition-mounts-against-proposed-lithium-ion-energy-storage-facility-in-skagit-county/281-35b667cb-aa4d-4fee-889e-29093501e323>

News - Fox 13 Seattle News Coverage

<https://www.fox13seattle.com/news/sedro-woolley-lithium-battery-facility>

CDC information on the effects on people from lithium battery fires:

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/hydrofluoricacid/basics/facts.asp>

Attached, the Commissioners press release, a letter from three state representatives, and a map of mile radius map from around the proposed facility.

Again, I strongly oppose BESS sites in Skagit County, and support a long term moritorium.

Thanks,
Zindra Nelson

August 28, 2024

Skagit County Commissioners Oppose Goldeneye BESS Project

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners has issued the following statement regarding the Goldeneye battery energy storage system project (BESS) east of Sedro-Woolley.

“After careful consideration of the application materials provided by Goldfinch Energy Storage and comments from the community, we must oppose the Goldeneye BESS project, proposed at a location in unincorporated Skagit County just east of Sedro-Woolley. The energy storage system threatens decades of collaborative local-tribal work and many millions of public dollars spent to restore Hansen Creek, home to four species of Pacific salmon, steelhead trout, and other wildlife. The Goldeneye BESS proposal would also convert Skagit farmland for industrial development, undermining our community’s long-term protection of Skagit Valley’s farmland and farming economy. Goldfinch Energy Storage has failed to adequately explore alternative sites for this project, instead proposing a location in a sensitive natural resource area for both agriculture and salmon, including Endangered Species Act-listed chinook. We strongly encourage the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council to reject this proposal. It is contrary to Skagit County’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted County code, and our community’s intergenerational commitment to protect the Skagit’s floodplain for farming and fisheries.”

The Board of Skagit County Commissioners will continue to advocate on our community’s behalf as the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) and the Governor consider the Goldeneye BESS project.

In addition, the Board of County Commissioners will be evaluating whether major utility developments should be sited on Skagit farmland in general. Currently, [Skagit County Code](#) requires major utility developments on farmland (properties zoned Ag-NRL) obtain a Hearing Examiner Special Use Permit, which involves an open record hearing after significant public notice. The Hearing Examiner Special Use Permit also requires the applicant conduct a vigorous alternative site analysis to ensure no project site other than Skagit farmland would be suitable.

Background on the Goldfinch Energy Storage Proposal

Goldfinch Energy Storage has [applied](#) to the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to develop a battery energy storage system (BESS) project in unincorporated Skagit County just east of Sedro-Woolley on Minkler Road. The project involves land on both sides of Hansen Creek, as well as a plan to tunnel under the creek.

The Goldeneye BESS project would consist of energy storage buildings containing racks of lithium-ion batteries and other electrical and communication equipment. The project site parcels are zoned Agriculture-Natural Resource Lands (Ag-NRL) and Rural Reserve (RRv).

The [EFSEC process](#) supersedes Skagit County’s authority to evaluate projects based on the County’s land use, environmental, and development regulations. EFSEC will make a

recommendation to the Governor. The Governor makes the final decision.

In early 2023, Goldfinch Energy Storage requested Skagit County Planning & Development Services issue an administrative official interpretation (AOI), determining whether the proposed Goldeneye BESS project would be defined as a “major utility development” or “major regional utility development.” [AOI 2023-01](#) was issued on February 1, 2023, and declared the proposed project to be a “major utility development” because it was determined the project lacked regionality as the energy stored would ostensibly only be used to supplement power grid needs within Skagit County, the project is of relatively small scale, and the project would not have large impacts compared to other major regional utility developments. Since then, Goldfinch Energy Storage has used AOI 2023-01 to argue the proposed Goldeneye project is allegedly consistent with Skagit County land use regulation.

In considering the AOI, Skagit County Planning & Development Services staff did not evaluate whether the proposed project was consistent with Skagit County land use regulation. The Board of County Commissioners does not believe the proposed Goldeneye project is consistent with Skagit County’s land use code, plans and regulations and AOI 2023-01 does not constitute Skagit County’s consent or approval of the Goldeneye project.

To find more information on the application by Goldfinch Energy Storage to EFSEC, or to sign up for project updates, please visit the [EFSEC website](#).



Washington State Legislature

August 23, 2024

Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council
621 Woodland Square Loop SE
Lacey, WA 98503

We are writing in opposition to the Goldeneye BESS proposal to be sited on agricultural land adjacent to Hansen Creek in Skagit County. As legislators representing the area we must thoughtfully weigh benefits versus risk and the will of our constituents living nearby.

Our first knowledge of the project came just prior to an Informational Meeting conducted in tandem with a Land Use Hearing held in Sedro-Woolley on August 13, 2024. Official notices of these meetings were provided to a very limited number of people so most people learned about it through social media. There is a sense in the community that this was done purposely to limit opposition.

Questions concerning the business model to recoup the \$250 M investment were vague at best; "it's complicated", "it depends" are not satisfying, confidence building answers and not what legislators expect from company representatives. Goldeneye creates no energy, it only consumes and stores energy, presumably for sales to the general market probably at premium prices due to its "renewable status." We are not opposed to profits but if we are to sacrifice our precious guarded agricultural lands it should be for new energy producing sources, not just a clever way to monetize existing power.

The proposed site is not only agricultural land it is directly adjacent to a salmon bearing stream, Hansen Creek, that has a history of flooding. The proposal actually requires tunneling under the creek to connect with PSE's transmission site. Hansen Creek also flows directly into the Skagit River, the importance of which cannot be overstated. It is hard to imagine a less appropriate location given the nature of lithium-ion batteries and their well-known issues with thermal runaway and combustion particularly when water is introduced to the chemical reaction. A cocktail of toxic gasses (hydrogen fluoride among them) is emitted during combustion which could endanger both local residents and any firefighters attempting to extinguish such a conflagration.

This technology does have potential; we are not opposed to its use but, siting criteria should include avoiding populated areas, fish producing bodies of water, vulnerable drinking water sources (to include groundwater), critical wildlife habitat, and agricultural

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areas. While this will preclude many financially tempting locations, we believe the public's safety should take priority. We ask that the Goldeneye BESS facility be sited in a safer, more appropriate location.

Kind regards,

Keith Wagoner
Senator

Carolyn Eslick
Representative

Sam Low
Representative

Cc: EFSEC Council Members
Governor Jay Inslee
Skagit County Commissioners



Northern State
Recreation Area

Washington Gutter

Cokedale

Minkler

Lyman

Cedar Springs Lodge

Day Creek

30.00 mi

0

Hart Island

Clear Lake

Clear Lake Beach

Baker Heights

Janick Dressage