



State of Washington
**Energy Facility
 Site Evaluation Council**

DRAFT

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement High-Voltage Transmission Facilities

PURPOSE & NEED

As directed by the Washington State Legislature in RCW 43.21C.405, this Draft Programmatic EIS analyzes potential direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the construction, operation and maintenance, and upgrade or modification of transmission facilities in the State of Washington.

The Draft Programmatic EIS includes an analysis of potential impacts on the elements of the natural and built environment specified under RCW 43.21C.405(3), WAC 197-11-444, and WAC 463-60-535.

This Draft Programmatic EIS is intended to:

PROVIDE A BROAD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

It presents an evaluation of environmental impacts associated with transmission facility development at a broad level throughout the State of Washington, rather than focusing on specific sites or corridors.

FACILITATE STREAMLINED PLANNING:

It assesses common impacts and mitigation strategies early in the planning process, which helps to streamline review and approval processes for individual transmission facility projects in the future. Streamlining the process can save time and resources for both developers and regulatory agencies.

SUPPORT INFORMED DECISION-MAKING:

It provides information that can help developers understand impacts up front and make initial siting¹ and design² choices that could avoid or minimize impacts at earlier phases of project consideration, potentially expediting the permitting timeline for future transmission facility development.

IDENTIFY MITIGATION STRATEGIES:

It identifies effective avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures³ to address adverse environmental

impacts, which can be applied to future transmission facility projects that fall within the scope of this Draft Programmatic EIS.

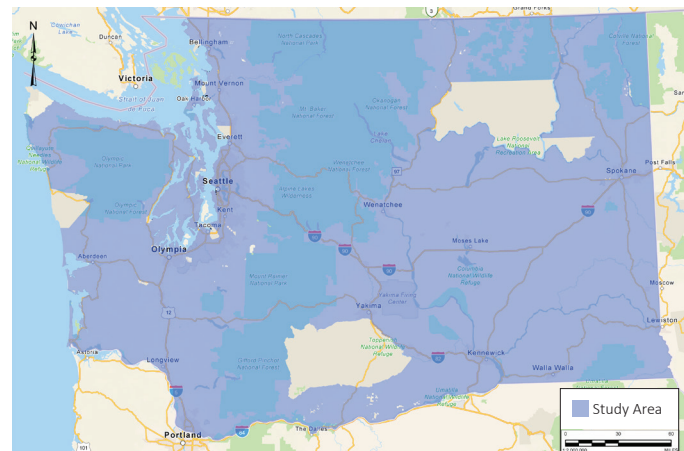
INITIATE PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:

It provides an up-front platform for public and stakeholder input, ensuring that community concerns and interests are considered early in the planning process.

As outlined in RCW 43.21C.408, this Draft Programmatic EIS, when finalized, will help facilitate project-specific applications for future transmission facilities in the State of Washington in an environmentally responsible and efficient manner.

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

The geographic scope, or Study Area, of this Draft Programmatic EIS includes areas throughout the State of Washington where transmission facilities are likely to be developed. For the purposes of this Draft Programmatic EIS, Tribal lands and undersea cables are not included in the Study Area.



¹ Siting involves identifying and evaluating potential routes for transmission facilities.

² Design involves the detailed planning of the transmission infrastructure.

³ WAC 197-11-768 outlines the concept of mitigation in the context of environmental impact. Mitigation includes: 1) Avoiding the impact, 2) Minimizing impacts, 3) Rectifying the Impact, 4) Reducing or eliminating the impact, 5) Compensating for the impact, and 6) Monitoring the impact.

Use of General Conditions, Avoidance Criteria, & Mitigation Measures

In this Draft Programmatic EIS, general conditions and avoidance criteria are integrated into the baseline analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the significance of an impact and how it can be managed.

- 1. GENERAL CONDITION:** This Draft Programmatic EIS assumes that applicants adhere to the specified general conditions.
- 2. AVOIDANCE CRITERIA:** This Draft Programmatic EIS assumes that project-specific applications comply with the identified avoidance criteria.

By incorporating these elements into the baseline analysis, this Draft Programmatic EIS provides a framework for understanding and managing the adverse impacts of project-specific applications at a broader scale. This approach helps ensure that environmental protection measures are considered from the outset and are integrated into the planning and decision-making process while offering a consistent understanding of what impacts may require project-specific environmental review and mitigation measures outside the scope of this Draft Programmatic EIS.

Mitigation measures to address adverse impacts on the environment are discussed in each section addressing elements of the environment in Chapter 3. Measures can be implemented to avoid, minimize, and/or otherwise mitigate impacts associated with the construction, operation and maintenance, or upgrade or modification of transmission facility development projects.

USE OF GOLDSET

Project-specific applications would include a comprehensive review and analysis to identify the site-specific adverse impacts on resources to determine the suitability of this Draft Programmatic EIS. Environmental review would be phased when adopting, supplementing or incorporating this document by reference, during the site specific environmental review phase. For more information on phased reviews, please refer to Chapter 1, Introduction.

Project-specific applications would include details about the precise location and site-specific conditions. For most elements of the environment, this Draft Programmatic EIS provides a suitability map that, when incorporated with project-specific applications, could be used to facilitate more informative and efficient environmental planning.

GoldSET is a comprehensive multi-criteria analysis tool that facilitates transparent spatial analysis, ultimately aiding in corridor optimization.

Data Acquisition & Processing

STUDY AREA




DATA CATALOG

- Environmental
- Social
- Economic
- Technical

Criteria Assessment

SELECTION




CLASSIFICATION

- Exclusion
- Constraints
- Opportunities
- No Go


Sustainability Analysis

SCENARIOS EVALUATION & CRITERIA AGGREGATION



Corridor/Route Optimization

CORRIDOR ANALYSIS & DETAILED ROUTING



Option Analysis

BENCHMARKING & OPTIONS EVALUATION



This Draft Programmatic EIS does not conduct the final two steps of the GoldSET approach: Corridor/Route Optimization and Option Analysis. While corridor/route optimization is beneficial for both industry and agencies, it requires potential “points of connection.” Since this Draft Programmatic EIS broadly evaluates the potential for transmission facility development across the state, it does not identify specific points of connection or corridors.

REVIEWING THE DRAFT PROGRAMMATIC EIS



The Draft Programmatic EIS and associated resource reports developed specifically for this environmental review are available at no cost on EFSEC’s [Programmatic EIS website](#).

To obtain a printed copy, CD, or USB drive of the Draft Programmatic EIS (for the cost of production), please contact efsec@efsec.wa.gov or (360) 664-1345.

www.efsec.wa.gov/energy-facilities/programmatic-eis