

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



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June 22, 2007

James O. Luce, Chair  
WA Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC)  
P.O. Box 43172  
Olympia Washington 98504-3172

RE: Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project  
EFSEC Recommendation Letter Dated May 2, 2007

Dear Mr. Luce:

After careful review of the above-referenced EFSEC recommendation letter, inclusive of attachments, concerning the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project (Project), and in accordance with RCW 80.50.100(c), I am directing EFSEC to reconsider Article I (C)(7) of the proposed Site Certification Agreement (Agreement) pertaining to turbine setbacks from adjacent land owners' residences without signed agreements with Sagebrush Power Partners, LLC.

My directive to EFSEC that the Agreement be reconsidered is solely focused on the need to determine on this particular Project whether additional setbacks beyond the four times height (4xh) requirement for non-participating landowners are achievable while allowing the Project to remain economically viable. EFSEC's recommendation, inclusive of attachments, is silent on this issue.

I wish to be clear about the reason for my decision. Local sentiment about this Project is just as important to me as it was for the Wild Horse Project. Indeed, where possible, I prefer to defer to local decision-makers on siting energy facilities. However, my preference must be weighed relative to this Project's implications and the state's energy policy objectives, such as those contained in Initiative 937 and EFSEC's enabling legislation. To that end, it is clear that this Project could reasonably and efficiently further statewide energy policy goals.


I am disappointed that the parties were unable to resolve the setback issue. The County did not articulate a well-reasoned setback standard during the hearing process. In this regard, I took special note of Council Order No. 827 that summarized discussions between the County and the applicant. (Order 827 at p. 3). As a result, EFSEC was left to articulate a standard for this Project on a land use decision that should have had more local input. After careful review of the record, I commend EFSEC for its thorough, thoughtful review of this issue and indeed the entire Project.



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Please note that I am very mindful of the cumulative impacts of wind power projects in Kittitas County and will continue to evaluate this issue.

Sincerely,

  
Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor