THE SUQUAMISH INDIAN TRIBE

FISHERIES DEPARTMENT

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Clean Energy Coordination
Department of Ecology
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Submitted online through https://ecology.commentinput.com?id=W5M3PBcHV

Subject: Scoping Document For Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Battery Energy Storage System Facilities in Washington State

This letter transmits the Suquamish Indian Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation comments on the "*Scoping Document For Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Battery Energy Storage System Facilities in Washington State*" or "*Scoping Document*".

The Suquamish people have lived, gathered plants, collected ceremonial and spiritual items, hunted, and fished since time immemorial in what is now western Washington State. The Suquamish Tribe (Tribe) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe and pursuant to the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott, the Tribe reserved the right to fish and gather shellfish at its "usual and accustomed" (U&A) fishing grounds and stations in Puget Sound. The Suquamish Tribe's U&A extends well beyond the Port Madison Reservation boundaries and includes the marine waters of Puget Sound from the northern tip of Vashon Island to the Fraser River in Canada, including Haro and Rosario Straits, the streams draining into the western side of Puget Sound and Hood Canal. The Tribe also reserved the right to hunt on all "open and unclaimed" lands throughout the Washington Territory. The Tribe actively works to ensure that activities within that area do not negatively impact (1) habitat and natural systems; and (2) the exercise of treaty and/or Aboriginal fishing rights.

General

The proposed PEIS will identify probable significant adverse environmental impacts and possible ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those impacts of BESS sites. However, unlike, the earlier PEISs for solar and onshore wind electrical generation – power generating systems using relatively mature and stable technology - battery technology can rapidly change and there is no industry standard. Currently, there are several different lithium-ion chemistries available for use at BESS sites, and the different chemistries can significantly affect thermal behavior and safety characteristics. In addition, there are also various types of battery enclosures in use such as: (1) containerized BESS; (2) purpose-built/skid-mounted enclosures; and (3) warehouse/large BESS buildings. This variability introduces great uncertainty in risk assessment. For example, the degree to which fire or a thermal-runaway event in one battery causing adjacent batteries/cells to fail depends in part upon the enclosure and spacing. Two BESS facilities of equal storage in the same landscape position, might behave much differently during a thermal run-away and fire. The

DPEIS should evaluate the extent to which varying battery chemistry and differing enclosure introduces unpredictability in understanding risk and the efficacy of mitigation measures.

Given this uncertainty, Ecology should consider, to the extent possible, the potential impacts of a thermal run-away event or fire, though use of a standard unit of BESS measurement, such as 100 Kilowatts of storage that can be scaled upwards. Then for whatever standard unit is selected and assuming complete failure, to the extent possible, based upon past experience and modelling, estimate risk such as the potential for a thermal run-away event, fire, potential response actions (i.e. the volume of water and suppressant needed to put out a fire); the distance to which impacts may be an issue (i.e. the area over which a toxic plume might be created or fragments thrown; *etc.)*.

Toxicity to aquatic life.

Page 17 of the Scoping Document states: "*The siting of BESS facilities has also been raised as a concern. This PEIS will provide siting and design considerations for developers to help avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.*"

The DPEIS should not assume that toxic runoff from a site will be contained within the site. To help regulatory agencies understand the potential impacts of a project during the site specific review process, the DPEIS should contain considerable toxicological information

The EIS should list individual as well as whole effluent lethal and non-lethal (behavioral, *etc*.) toxicity to all salmon species, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout from runoff from the various types of batteries that can be used in the situations where there is (1) no fire, but water is used to cool the batteries (particularly if leaking); and (2) a fire and the suppression chemicals normally used to fight fires at BESS facilities are used. If there is no whole effluent toxicity information available, that should be noted in the DPEIS. In addition, if there are no standards for what is considered an exceedance, that should also be noted in the DPEIS.

Also, include discussion of Best Management Practices (BMPs). It should be not be assumed that leakage or runoff will be maintained with the secondary containment.

Fire and explosion hazards

Page 16 of the Scoping Document states; "*Specifically, we heard concerns about adequate training and equipment for local responders, the difficulty of extinguishing fires, risks of hazardous air emissions, impacts to water and fish, and cleanup. This PEIS will evaluate potential risks and environmental health impacts for stand-alone BESS.*"

The DPEIS should include the results of outreach to appropriate emergency responders for input on minimal required equipment and training needs in relation to size and number of proposed projects in a community (rural vs. urban)..

Product life cycle

The Scoping Document (page 16) states "*Lithium-ion batteries have a typical lifespan of 10 to 25 years and would experience a gradual performance degradation over time.*" The DPEIS should provide information as to whether the majority of the batteries need to be replaced at approximately the same time or if replacement is spread out over years. It should also be discussed if the batteries become more susceptible to overheating as they age.

In addition, are there appropriate disposal facilities in Washington? If yes, how many and where are they located? What is the maximum capacity of these facilities? If spent batteries must be transported, what are the safety requirements?

Joint Use sites

Page 17 of the Scoping Document states: "*This PEIS will evaluate potential risks and environmental health impacts for stand-alone BESS*" and page 18: "*In 2025, Ecology released analysis of the potential significant adverse impacts of BESS co-located with utility-scale solar and utility-scale onshore wind facilities in their respective PEISs. Table 1 provides excerpts of potential significant impacts for these types of facilities and this PEIS will conduct additional analysis of impacts specific to stand-alone lithium-ion BESS facilities.*" Due to the potential for additive or synergistic issues, if a BESS site is co-located the PEIS should also consider those potential impacts or require an additional EIS when energy generating components are added.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Scoping Document. If there are any questions or discussions needed to better understand the Tribe's comments, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 360-394-8449.

Sincerely,



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Cc: Alison O'Sullivan, Ecosystem Recovery Program Manager