Eric Laurence

To the Members of the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council, I am writing to express my vehement and total opposition to the proposed Cascadia Ridge Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project planned near Snoqualmie Ridge. Siting a massive, utility-scale industrial lithium-ion energy storage facility in this specific location is an egregious threat to public health and safety. The project's proximity to dense residential neighborhoods, schools, medical facilities, and major recreational hubs—combined with severe infrastructure limitations—creates an unacceptable disaster waiting to happen.

1. Extreme Proximity to Vulnerable Populations and Critical Infrastructure:
The proposed site is dangerously close to major community assets where thousands of vulnerable citizens live, learn, work, and gather daily. It is situated less than a mile from several critical locations and within a two-mile radius of multiple elementary schools where hundreds of young children are concentrated here daily, representing a population uniquely vulnerable to toxic airborne hazards. A local Hospital and medical facilities: Facilities housing patients who cannot easily or rapidly self-evacuate in an emergency. A High-Density Commercial/Shopping Center which is a major hub for daily public commerce and gathering. Thousands of residential homes & a country club comprised of a densely populated community where thousands of families reside. Placing a high-risk industrial energy facility immediately adjacent to schools, healthcare centers, and thousands of homes violates basic principles of industrial land-use safety and human protection.

2. Catastrophic Evacuation Bottleneck (Single Point of Ingress/Egress):
Snoqualmie Ridge operates under severe geographic and infrastructure constraints—most notably, the extreme limitation of essentially having only one primary way in and one way out for thousands of residents. In the event of a catastrophic failure, thermal runaway, or explosion—which can release toxic, heavy, and immediately dangerous gases (such as hydrogen fluoride)—an emergency evacuation of the Ridge would face immediate, crippling gridlock. A mass evacuation order bottlenecked by a single primary thoroughfare would render orderly exit impossible. This dynamic transforms a localized industrial incident into a potential mass-casualty catastrophe, threatening the lives of thousands of residents, school children, and hospital patients, and ranking it among the most hazardous industrial land-use mismatches in the region's history.

3. Noise Pollution and Continuous Industrial Disruption:
In addition to catastrophic safety risks, the continuous operational noise pollution from heavy utility-scale cooling fans, inverters, and transformers will fundamentally degrade the quality of life and acoustic environment for nearby residential areas, the adjacent park-lands, and community spaces. Industrial decibel outputs and low-frequency tonal hums running continuously near family neighborhoods and schools violate the baseline expectations of a peaceful residential zone. The combination of high-density residential proximity, vulnerable public institutions (schools and hospitals), and a critically compromised single-access evacuation route makes this site fundamentally unsuited for a utility-scale BESS facility.I strongly urge the department to reject this site certification application outright, or at minimum, mandate a comprehensive, independent, worst-case-scenario Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and toxic plume / evacuation modeling study that fully evaluates the catastrophic risk to human life on Snoqualmie Ridge. Anything less serves as a potential gross mismanagement of responsibility.

4. Financial Windfalls and Speculative Industrial Expansion Cannot Outweigh Public Safety:
I recognize the immense fiscal incentives and private capital driving this project. It is glaringly apparent that the push to place a utility-scale energy storage facility in such an inappropriate, high-density residential zone is driven by corporate financial interests, lucrative energy contracts, and potentially the speculative infrastructure needs of future heavy-power consumers, such as data centers. While this project will undoubtedly add zeros to the bank accounts of private developers and energy stakeholders, their financial gain cannot be subsidized by the safety, well-being, and property values of thousands of Snoqualmie Ridge residents. A clear-eyed view of this proposal reveals a profound imbalance: a handful of corporate entities reap the immense economic benefits, while our families, schools, and local infrastructure are forced to bear 100% of the catastrophic life-safety risks. Profit and industrial expansion must never outweigh the preservation of human life and community safety.