Susan VerGowe

To the Department of Ecology, Clean Energy Coordination:

My name is Susan VerGowe and I live at 7830 Cortland Ave SE, Snoqualmie. I am writing to submit a scoping comment on the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for stand-alone, utility-scale, lithium-ion battery energy storage system facilities in Washington (Publication 26-06-017).

I am commenting because a stand-alone BESS facility is proposed in the Snoqualmie Valley, and Ecology has said that project-level reviews will tier to this PEIS. Ecology has asked for input on questions for the study. My comment addresses the following:

Q2 · Geographic scope — Where the study assumes batteries will go.
The Ecology study should define "suitable" areas by what is safe for the people who live there, not just by where a facility could physically be built. Closeness to existing infrastructure should not be used as a stand-in for a safe site. Being near a substation should not make a place "suitable." I ask that the PEIS's geographic-scope assumptions explicitly account for proximity to homes, schools, and hospitals; wildland-urban interface and wildfire-prone areas; seismic hazard zones and floodplains; areas dependent on private wells; and communities with limited evacuation routes — and that proximity to existing infrastructure not be treated as a proxy for suitability.

Q3 · Impacts to analyze — The harms the study has to look at.
It's crucial that responder training, hard-to-extinguish fires, toxic air, harm to water and fish, and cleanup each get a full analysis, not a mention, as the Ecology study scoping document states it "will evaluate" each of them. It's important that the study model what a battery fire's smoke does to the people living nearby. The scoping document acknowledges toxic gas from damaged batteries can hurt firefighters' skin and lungs. It does not mention neighbors, who have no protective gear and may not be able to leave. Evacuation, displacement, and offsite cleanup should count as impacts in their own right. Ecology's own example, the Moss Landing fire, forced 1,200 people from their homes. The Snoqualmie Valley has VERY limited evacuation routes that rapidly clog to as standstill. Efficient quick and reliable evacuation routes must exist for all people within a 3-5 mile radius of any Battery Storage Facility. I ask that the PEIS analyze, for stand-alone facilities: thermal-runaway fires and hazardous-gas emissions (including hydrogen fluoride) with dispersion modeling for inversion-prone valleys; contaminated fire-suppression water and its path to groundwater, private wells, and fish-bearing streams; multi-day incident demands on local fire, HazMat, hospital, and evacuation capacity; continuous nighttime noise from cooling and inverters at distances beyond 1,000 feet; and seismic performance of container-based installations in mapped fault zones.

This is personal for my household. I live under 1 mile from the proposed site. In an emergency my household would evacuate via Snoqualmie Parkway, along with everyone else who depends on that road.

Because Ecology itself says stand-alone facilities "could be sited in a variety of locations," including near cities, the PEIS should not assume facilities will be far from people. I ask that Ecology treat proximity to residents as a defining condition of the analysis, and that the Draft PEIS

state plainly which impacts cannot be mitigated below significance, so that lead agencies and the public are not left to guess.

Thank you for considering this comment. Please include it in the scoping record. Our community is following this PEIS closely and intends to participate in the Draft PEIS comment period.

Sincerely,
Susan VerGowe
7830 Cortland Ave SE, Snoqualmie