

# Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council

Thank you. Good evening. My name is Mark Riker. I'm the Executive Secretary of Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council, representing approximately 80,000 construction workers from all crafts here in Washington State. I'm here today in strong support on their behalf for this project. One of the challenges that we faced when we supported the Clean Energy Transformation Act is the transition away from fossil fuels, and this was the exact type of project that we envisioned when we supported that piece of legislation and transformative legislation. A project like this that will help us transition away while creating approximately 3,000 construction jobs and many apprenticeship opportunities. For those that aren't familiar with the apprenticeship system, apprenticeships generally take between four and five years to complete. So 3,000 project -- a 3,000-person project offering approximately 450 -- 450 opportunities for apprentices can darn near finish your entry level into a really good family-wage career. The economic generation that a project like this can bring to a rural community is exactly what we're looking for when we're trying to get away from fossil fuel sector supply. A project like this is an appropriate place for the thorough review that Ecology has been doing. We commend you on that. I want to go back to apprenticeship for just a moment, and there's a reason I'm so passionate about apprenticeship. And I echo everything that all of my colleagues have said and everyone here this evening. But apprenticeship is personal to me. I grew up in a farming community, a logging community in Arlington, Washington, in the '70s and '80s. And after my sophomore year in high school, I was a homeless kid in Arlington with no real opportunity. After some troubles and some struggles in, you know, my early years, not being the brightest human being on the planet, I got the opportunity get into an apprenticeship, a construction apprenticeship. And now, not only do I have a middle class lifestyle, my son and my granddaughters have a middle class lifestyle. That's the power of apprenticeship. There's something important about apprenticeship that everybody needs to remember, as well. Apprenticeship starts with a job. To give opportunity, we need opportunity. Our developer partners, our community partners, our governmental partners, all working together to transition away from fossil fuel to a clean energy tomorrow, I say let's build our way out of it. Let's give the opportunities to folks in the rural communities. The developer has already agreed to negotiating the terms of a PLA, project labor agreement. You know what those terms of that agreement can -- can include? Local hire. We can give opportunities to ensure that this isn't just constructed by folks from way away from Goldendale. We can build it with folks from Goldendale, from the outlying regions near Goldendale. Give opportunity while we're building it here. So I'm just asking you for strong support of this project. Let's get this built. Thank you.