

Kevin Lux

Good evening. My name is Kevin Lux. I'm the union electrician and member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48. Good evening, staff and Department of Ecology, members of the public, and I'd like to thank the residents of the greater Goldendale community. What a lovely bunch of people, and beautiful surroundings we enjoy outside. Now, it is great to be wearing slacks tonight, not the drywall dust that I'm used to. I'd like to start with a quote from the great -- late, great Woody Guthrie; activist, musician, and lover of mother nature. In the 1940s, he traveled to the Pacific Northwest, saw our beautiful Columbia River, and wrote a handful of songs. In one, he spoke to making use of natural resources saying, "Roll Columbia River roll wild and free. As long as you're rolling, won't you do some work for me." In praise of the great work of the hydroelectric dams being put in and continuing to be put in at the time, making our state great. Now, could he have imagined now that we would be putting wind and solar to work, as well? You know, what an amazing time we are living in. But we face a serious problem with power generation at this time. The Pacific Northwest currently has a deficit of 1.2 gigawatts. That's more than the demands of Seattle. This deficit is growing, and especially as we take coal and natural gas offline a result of stricter CETA regulations. At this very moment, power projects that we hope to build between now and 2030 won't even keep pace with growing demands. We currently have 64 gigawatts of nameplate power. Between now and 2045, we need to build 100 gigawatts of new renewable power to keep the lights on and meet our climate goals. We see what's going on with California with blackouts and brownouts, and we can't afford these threats here, especially as we face more and more wildfires. We know that greatest threat to salmon, steelhead, orcas, and all of wildlife is climate change. I don't think that the EIS fully accounts for or places proper emphasis on the impacts that this project can make for reducing -- for making our planet better and our lungs happier. Wind and solar rely on a solid foundation of dispatchable power to be viable. The wind doesn't always blow, as we know right here. Sometimes it blows too hard. The sun sets, and battery technology is still far away from meeting our demands. This project will make more wind and solar projects viable, a means for smoothing out our demands for efficient power. It's going to keep up with our pace of demands and offer us an opportunity to power -- to sell excess power to California, and keep our power rates low while meeting our CETA goals, transitioning to a greener economy. Fighting forest fires in the real way; fighting climate change itself, at the source. All people can benefit from a happier planet, and this EIS needs to put greater emphasis on these current realities and a future promise. Thank you.