

Klickitat County EDA Anonymous

Please see comments attached from the Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority (Klickitat County EDA).



KLICKITAT COUNTY PUBLIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

115 W. Court Street, MS 207, Goldendale WA 98620
Office: 509-773-7060

August 9, 2022

Sage Park
Washington State Department of Ecology
1250 West Alder Street
Union Gap, WA 98903-0009

Re: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project

Dear Ms. Park,

The Klickitat County Public Economic Development Authority (Klickitat EDA) was formed in 1995. Its Board of Directors includes the three Klickitat County commissioners, the mayors of the county's three incorporated cities, a Port of Klickitat County commissioner, a Klickitat County Public Utility District commissioner, and other stakeholders. The Klickitat EDA's mission is to enhance the economy of Klickitat County and the lives of its citizens by using all available resources to create opportunity and employment through sustained leadership, planning and strategic investment. Today, I am writing at the direction of Klickitat EDA's Board of Directors to express the Board's support for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project and the economic benefits it will yield.

The Goldendale Energy Storage Project is identified as a catalyst opportunity for Central Klickitat County in our 10-year Economic Development Strategic Plan (<http://klickitatcounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/3482/2017-05-22-Klickitat-County-Strategic-Plan-V14-FINAL-PDF>). Catalyst opportunities are projects that have the greatest short- and long-term promise to accelerate economic growth. We submit that the EIS for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project should address the Project's socioeconomic impacts, which will be significant.

After the Gorge Aluminum Smelter closed in 2003, Central Klickitat County experienced challenges economically, including a decreasing population and an industrial base lacking diversification. In the short-term, the Goldendale Energy Storage project will supply an estimated 3,000 construction jobs, providing critical local employment. Local businesses (e.g. restaurants, hotels, RV parks) will benefit from increased visitation

during construction, providing a boost to the local economy. The project will also support the development of a diversified, skilled workforce by providing the opportunity for workers to complete trade apprenticeships. Over the long-term, the project will provide 40 to 60 well paying, direct jobs during operations and a significant bump in tax revenue, which through the County and junior taxing districts will be reinvested in the community to support roads, schools, and emergency services. This project is an opportunity to once again realize economic prosperity for Central Klickitat County by redeveloping a former industrial site for a new, suitable use.

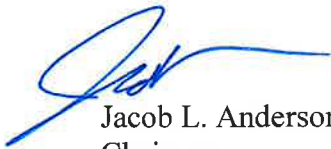
The benefits of this project extend beyond just the economic. The developer will assist with brownfield remediation at the Gorge Aluminum Smelter site, addressing a long-standing environmental concern. The project will also help secure power grid reliability by giving us a way to store energy generated by solar and wind power facilities, making Klickitat County's prior clean energy investments even more valuable. The federal government and Washington State have both set aggressive renewable energy goals, and projects like the Goldendale Energy Storage Project are vital to making those goals a reality.

Scaling up our energy infrastructure to invest in a clean energy future always involves tradeoffs. However, as the draft EIS identifies, the impacts of this proposed project on land and water resources are expected to be minimal and have viable mitigation pathways. The developer appears committed to developing this locally- and regionally-important project in an environmentally responsible manner.

We again express Klickitat EDA's support for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project. It will yield critical short- and long-term economic benefits to Central Klickitat County and support federal and state renewable energy goals.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Anderson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jacob L. Anderson
Chairman