

Jessica Metta

Please see the attached comments on behalf of Mid-Columbia Economic Development District.



July 20, 2022

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

Re: Comment period for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project draft EIS

Dear Ms. Park,

I am writing on behalf of Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) regarding the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Goldendale Energy Storage Project. The project, which is located within the Columbia Gorge Renewable Energy Zone, is a high-priority project listed in MCEDD's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and is our No. 1 priority project in Washington state.

As Oregon and Washington make the transition to a 100% carbon-free grid, the wind, solar and hydro facilities in the Columbia River Gorge will play an increasingly important role in our electricity system. To completely phase out fossil fuel-based power plants, along with the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) associated with them, we will need to add more renewables, along with reliable large-scale energy storage facilities, to the grid. Both will be necessary for ensuring the lights stay on in our homes, businesses, hospitals, schools and other buildings and for meeting the goals of Washington State's Clean Energy Transformation Act.

MCEDD commends the WA Department of Ecology for completing the draft EIS, which is a big milestone and be a valuable tool for decision makers. We suggest the draft EIS consider the positive environmental impacts of cleaning up a very contaminated industrial site and utilizing it in a way that will help the region meets its clean energy goals over the next century.

We would also like to comment on the positive economic impacts the proposed Goldendale Energy Storage Project would have on our region. The proposed pumped storage facility is a creative reuse of a former brownfield site that will create more than 3,000 family-wage jobs at a time when rural Washington and Oregon desperately need them. Given the length of the construction timeline, it will provide training and apprenticeship opportunities for people seeking careers in the building trades. These jobs will be union jobs, which guarantees fair wages and safe working conditions, which are the types of jobs we want to grow in our region.

In conclusion, MCEDD believes the Goldendale Energy Storage Project is the type of project that will help Washington and Oregon reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, significantly reduce GHG emissions and air pollution, make our electricity grid more resilient to power outages, and create economic opportunities for rural communities.

Sincerely,

Jessica Metta