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85 John Day Dam Rd.
Goldendale, WA 98620

Klickitat County Planning Commission
115 W Court St.
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VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL: planning2@klickitatcounty.org

Comments on the Proposed Solar/BESS Ordinance

To my fellow citizens,

For nearly four decades, the smelter at 85 John Day Dam Rd served as a cornerstone of the local economy. Today, the site has the potential to once again drive generational economic growth for Goldendale, Klickitat County, and the region. Achieving this requires thoughtful and effective policy.

Since the first time I stepped foot in Goldendale over twenty years ago, I have admired the efforts undertaken to promote responsible energy development and economic progress, notably with the Energy Overlay District. However, I am concerned that the current Ordinance does not reflect the high standards set by such previous initiatives.

While I support many of the intentions behind the proposed Solar/BESS Ordinance, I must express reservations about several provisions that create confusion and impracticality. If left unaddressed, these issues may result in EFSEC becoming the only viable route for developing solar and BESS projects in Klickitat County—an outcome I hope to avoid.

Industry experts have highlighted to me numerous technical challenges beyond my expertise. Rather than repeating their concerns, I will focus on the implications from a landowner's perspective, trusting specialists to address the technical and legal details.

NSC's property is distinctive, consisting of an industrial park—the former smelter site—and nearly 5,500 acres zoned as agricultural or open space. The land features shallow soils atop basalt, has never been farmed, and only supports limited grazing. Notably, the property retains significant water access, secured alongside KPUD for future needs, and hosts a substation with multiple high-voltage transmission lines. These characteristics have facilitated successful wind development and position the site as exceptionally suited

for future energy generation and storage, such as the long proposed pumped hydro project by FFP 101, LLC and more recently, a 1,200MW BESS project.

Key Concerns

- **Review Process:** A streamlined review, as outlined in section A.2, is desirable. However, including arbitrary criteria such as “Environmentally Sourced Raw Materials,” “ethical, sustainable and socially conscious practices throughout the supply chain,” and “commercially reasonable glare,” as well as the requirements of B.7.i26 (Raw Materials), introduces ambiguity. These standards lack clear benchmarks and could lead to endless debate, rendering projects unfeasible and driving developers toward EFSEC.
- **Comprehensive Plan Goals:** References to unadopted Comprehensive Plan Goals create confusion. Development of NSC land is generally acknowledged as favorable for the county’s health, safety, and welfare, yet the zoning framework—requiring BESS on industrial land and limiting coverage to 20% as per B.7i8—contradicts best practices. The land most suitable for grid-scale BESS on NSC property is not zoned as industrial, due to historical reasons rather than current use. Were it industrial, requiring that 80% of it remain unused is particularly problematic.
- **Definition of “Active Agricultural Land”:** Section 24 fails to define this term. NSC considers all its property to fit the description, but a clear definition would be beneficial.
- **Fiscal Analysis:** NSC favors direct collaboration with the County to address local needs and supports greater flexibility in Community Benefit Plans (C.1.13), which should be negotiated directly with the County and its junior taxing districts to inform Conditional Use Permit outcomes.
- **Site Plan Requirements (B.7.i):** Mandating fully engineered, stamped drawings at the application stage is not commercially reasonable and does not align with standard project development practices. This costly requirement alone makes County applications impractical.
- **Temporary Uses (B.7.l):** Requiring a temporary use permit for any investigatory work is overly broad. This provision should be narrowly and clearly defined.
- **Technology References:** The ordinance cites both solar and BESS technologies in instances where only one applies, such as agrivoltaics, which pertain solely to solar.
- **Setback Requirements:** The setbacks for solar and BESS installations are excessive.

I recognize the significant effort invested in drafting this Ordinance and hope this work continues to refine and improve the document, making it practical and encouraging the use of County permitting rather than EFSEC. As a major local stakeholder, I believe retaining permitting at the County level is in Klickitat's best interest, but fear that without substantial changes, the Ordinance may instead push developers toward EFSEC.

I respectfully request extending the public input period and engaging industry experts to craft a thoughtful, effective Ordinance that benefits the County, its citizens, and stakeholders.

I remain committed to constructive collaboration and welcome opportunities to help advance this ordinance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Tillman", written in a cursive style.

Scott Tillman
NSC Smelter, LLC