



**October 2025**

Dear Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council,

**RE: Comment on Draft Resolution 357, Horse Heaven Hills Wind and Solar Project**

Dear Chair Beckett and Council Members,

On behalf of the Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 900 businesses and organizations across Benton and Franklin Counties, we submit this letter to reaffirm our continued opposition to the proposed Horse Heaven Hills Wind and Solar Project and urge the Council to reject Resolution 357 as currently drafted.

For over four years, the Tri-City community has consistently expressed significant concerns regarding the project's scale, location, and long-term consequences. The project's massive footprint, encompassing roughly 72,000 acres and stretching 26 miles along the Horse Heaven Hills, would impose irreversible harm to our region's visual character, tourism economy, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources. These concerns were validated in EFSEC's 2024 recommendation to reduce the project size and strengthen mitigation for visual, cultural, and environmental impacts, a recommendation that was later overruled by the Governor without adequate justification or community consultation.

The Council must also acknowledge the overwhelming local opposition to this development project. In our public survey of more than 2,200 Tri-City residents, over 78 percent opposed the project, citing loss of viewshed, negative impacts on birds and wildlife, light pollution, and threats to tourism and property values.

These concerns remain unaddressed in Resolution 357. Moreover, the project is inconsistent with Benton County's Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas Ordinance, a fundamental conflict that cannot be resolved through post-hoc mitigation.

However, Resolution 357 fails to rectify these shortcomings. The proposed "Spec-5" mitigation measures do not adequately protect critical ferruginous hawk habitat nor account for the project's cumulative visual and recreational impacts on a major population center. The mitigation framework remains vague, unenforceable, and dependent on future actions by the applicant, an approach that undermines public confidence and the Council's duty under the State Environmental Policy Act.

Washington's State Energy Strategy recognizes that "public and community participation is essential to ensure energy policy is informed by local knowledge and meets local needs." In this case, the principle has been largely ignored. Our region already hosts one of the most diverse and

non-emitting energy portfolios in the nation, and hydropower and nuclear generation account for over 93 percent of our base-load power with a fraction of the land use. Adding an industrial-scale wind installation within the view of our urban core is not only redundant but also contrary to the balanced energy and economic goals of this region.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the EFSEC reject Resolution 357 and reaffirm its original recommendation to limit the project's scope and ensure meaningful protections for our community, cultural resources, and environment. The Council's credibility and public trust depend on a process that values science, local input, and long-term sustainability over political expedience.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your continued service in upholding the principles of a transparent, community-driven energy policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Mattson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping tail.

**Lori Mattson, IOM**

President & CEO

Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce