

September 2004

# Klickitat County Energy Overlay

## Final Environmental Impact Statement



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Prepared for:

**Klickitat County**  
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**Energy Overlay Final Environmental Impact Statement**

**Title** Klickitat County Energy Overlay Final EIS

**Proposal** Klickitat County is evaluating its Comprehensive Plan and development regulations to facilitate energy development in optimal locations within the County. The County’s goal is to encourage energy development where it will be less likely to have probable, significant, adverse environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated; where there is adequate infrastructure; where it is consistent with existing and planned land use; and where the development can take advantage of the County’s existing energy resources.

**Alternatives** **Technology** - The EIS looks at different energy technologies and evaluates their typical impacts and the likelihood of their development within the County. Energy uses that have impacts that can be reduced below a level of probable significance through appropriate siting and mitigation, and are likely to be developed within the County are identified. Those energy uses that are not reasonable or feasible under current forecasting are rejected. Those energy technologies carried forward for analyses in the EIS include: Wind, gas-fired generation, biomass, and solar.

**Geography** - The development and scope of an Energy Overlay Zone are considered in the context of existing land use, wind energy resources, and existing infrastructure. An Energy Overlay Zone would permit specified energy projects outright following environmental review if sited within the boundaries of the Overlay. After analyzing the various types of energy that the Overlay could address, the EIS studies the geography of the County, as the Geographic Alternative. The EIS identifies the areas of the County that have the greatest environmental sensitivity and determines where it is most likely that energy development can occur without significant environmental impacts if appropriate mitigation is provided. Incorporated into this assessment of where Overlay boundaries are drawn is an analysis of the locations of County energy resources and essential infrastructure. Overall, those areas that are less likely to meet these basic criteria are rejected. Based on this analysis, the County will make a legislative decision on where energy development should be encouraged.

The Final EIS adds a new “Limited Geographic Alternative” that defines a narrower geographic area within the Energy Overlay Zone where gas-fired and bio mass energy plants could be sited. Gas-fired power plants require a considerable amount of water for cooling, and current economic criteria for developing gas-fired plants require that facilities be located within two miles of an existing natural gas pipeline. The Limited Geographic Alternative

limits development of gas-fired facilities to areas within two miles of an existing gas pipeline and within one mile of a public land survey section that has at least 500 acre-feet of water rights.

The Limited Geographic Alternative also geographically limits development of biomass-fueled plants. In addition to the need for adequate water for cooling, two key criteria for any potential future development of biomass are:

- Locating near a forest products manufacturer or other source of significant quantities of waste wood and biomass fuel.
- Locating near a plant that has a demand for a high-pressure steam in a manufacturing process.

Recognizing these criteria, the Limited Geographic Alternative limits development of biomass facilities to the White Salmon-Bingen area.

**Procedural - Procedural Alternative 1.** This procedural alternative would permit energy development outright within the Overlay Zone after SEPA review and relevant permitting processes are completed. Development outside of the overlay would still be allowed under the County’s existing conditional use process. The existing permitting structure currently does and will continue to give the County the authority to deny projects under SEPA when significant, adverse environmental impacts cannot be mitigated. When a conditional use permit is required, projects can be denied where the conditional use criteria cannot be met.

**Procedural Alternative 2.** Under this procedural alternative, the County would incorporate the Overlay, but exclude energy development outside of the boundaries of the Energy Overlay Zone. This alternative has the benefit of reducing the potential for significant, adverse environmental impacts outside of an Overlay in areas where there is a greater potential for adverse impacts. The disadvantage of this alternative is that it may not achieve the County’s goal to encourage energy development in optimal locations, as there are likely good locations for energy projects, depending on their size outside the Overlay.

**No Action Alternative.** The EIS also considers the No-Action Alternative. Currently, energy projects are permitted through a conditional use permitting process. The EIS analyzes the disadvantages and advantages of retaining this current process.

Preferred Alternative

The Final EIS identifies the preferred alternative as the Limited Geographic Alternative with Procedural Alternative 1. This alternative would allow gas-fired, bio mass, wind, and solar facilities to be sited within the Energy Overlay without a conditional

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use process. Proposals would be required to complete the County SEPA review process and obtain all necessary local, state, and federal permits and approvals before starting construction. Gas-fired plants would be restricted to areas within the Overlay that have at least 500 acre-feet of water and within two miles of an existing gas pipeline. Biomass facilities would be restricted to the White Salmon - Bingen area.

Location	Klickitat County is in southern Washington bordering the Columbia River.	
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Responsible Official	Curt Dreyer Director Klickitat County Planning Dept. 228 W. Main, MS-CH-17 Goldendale, Washington 98620	
Authors	Anchor Environmental	Final EIS
	Aspect Consultants	Water quality & quantity
	CH2M Hill	Wind Energy Cultural Resources Fisheries
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	WEST	Avian Studies
Date of Draft EIS Issue	August 6, 2003	
Public Hearing on Draft	August 26, 2003	

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End of Comment Period	September 5, 2003
Comment Period Extension	October 3, 2003
Date of Final EIS Issue	September 3, 2004
Date of Final Action	The Energy Overlay Zone associated with the FEIS will be reviewed by the Klickitat County Planning Commission during the fall of 2004. The Planning Commission will make their recommendations to the Klickitat County Board of County Commissioners and the County Commissioners will take action on the proposal later in 2004.
Location of FEIS technical reports and background information	Klickitat County Planning Dept. 228 W Main, MS-CH-17 Goldendale, Washington 98620
Cost of FEIS	CD \$5, Hard Copy \$75. The FEIS is available for free by downloading at ( <a href="http://www.klickitatcounty.org/Planning/">http://www.klickitatcounty.org/Planning/</a> )
Permits or Licenses Required for the Project:	This nonproject action contemplates amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and development regulations. No permits or licenses are required for such amendments. Future energy projects developed under the amended plan and implementing development regulations may require state or federal air quality permits, water quality permits, county building permits, and additional environmental review under SEPA.