



Dear Chair Doglio, Vice Chair Hunt, and Ranking Member Dye,

Renewable Northwest is a regional renewable energy advocacy nonprofit, and our members are a combination of renewable energy businesses and environmental groups. Our mission is to decarbonize the region by accelerating the transition to affordable, renewable electricity.

As written, we are opposed to HB1188, to require local government and Tribal approval of wind and solar siting recommendations by the energy facility site evaluation council. Renewable energy projects are sited and approved through rigorous review by the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). EFSEC already faces layers of complicated analysis, at a time when we are facing great challenges in meeting our state clean energy mandates. Unfortunately, as drafted we see the language in HB 1188 amounting to a veto power for local governments and Tribes over this balanced body, and adding more uncertainty into the process. Not only would this bill impose challenges to siting, it may also deter renewable energy developers from choosing to work in our state.

We appreciate that this bill aims to provide Tribes and local governments with more tools to engage in renewable energy siting, and support this intent. In the existing EFSEC process, there are already numerous places for local and Tribal involvement. In fact, the legislative authority of every city and county where there is a proposed site must appoint a member or designee as a voting member of EFSEC. Each federally recognized Tribe affected by the proposed facility must be notified, and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) must coordinate with each affected Tribe and with the applicant. Additionally, the EFSEC Chair and staff must offer government-to-government consultation to address any concern raised by tribes. A summary of the consultation process is included in the recommendation to the Governor for his/her final decision on project approval. In this way, local and Tribal priorities are included in the decision-making process, balanced along with other considerations. Perhaps, we could work with the Committee to find opportunities for improved local and Tribal involvement within this existing framework. Developers are still meeting county substantive criteria where applicable in the EFSEC process.

We thank the Committee for considering our views and stand ready to answer questions or assist with new language.

Sincerely,

Casey MacLean
Washington Policy Manager
Renewable Northwest