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June 12, 2026

Pierce County  
Community Development and  
Environment Committee  
930 Tacoma Avenue S  
Tacoma, WA 98402

**RE: Proposed Ordinance No. O2026-526**

Dear Councilmembers:

On behalf of (“Tacoma Public Utilities, Renewable Northwest, South Sound Building & Construction Trades Council AFL-CIO, Pierce Central Labor Council AFL-CIO, IBEW 76, LiUNA Laborers Local 252, IUOE Local 612”), and Puget Sound Energy (“PSE”), we would like to thank Pierce County’s Community Development and Environment Committee (“Committee”) and staff for the opportunity to comment on Proposed Ordinance No. O2026-526 regarding policy updates to Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems (“BESS”).

Solar and BESS are necessary, cost-effective solutions to providing reliable power as utilities bring on additional renewable generation. Batteries are essential to maintain grid reliability, accommodate increased demand for electricity, and improve the efficiency of intermittent resources like wind and solar. These solutions will help Washington State meet its’ Clean Energy Transformation Act (“CETA”) requirements. Passed in 2019, CETA commits the state to be 100 percent clean by 2045. Furthermore, another decarbonization law passed in 2024 (HB 1589) – which applies to PSE – requires utility-scale projects that cost over \$10 million and are selected in a PSE Request for Proposal to be constructed under a Project Labor Agreement or Community Workforce Agreement. For example, that may involve our labor partners at the South Sound Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO. These laws include specific requirements for utilities, ensuring that all equitably benefit from the transition to clean energy. Overall, PSE projects a need for nearly 1,500 megawatts of energy storage by 2030.

We support updated solar and BESS codes that provide clear guidance on siting and building clean energy infrastructure. However, there are a few areas of concern with the draft as written as we strive to meet sustainability goals and deadlines. We agree with the Planning Commission’s previous comments during the January 2026 introduction of the code amendments that setbacks and buffers should be removed from the language. Appropriate setbacks can be addressed under

the Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) process which is recommended under the new code for primary and utility-scale use. We also recommend that zones that prohibit BESS be considered under the CUP process due to existing electrical infrastructure.

We also urge the Committee to adopt current national, robust standards for BESS safety protocols, risk analysis, and decommissioning plans. Regulated setbacks and buffer zones that go beyond NFPA 855, UL regulations, and state building codes can slow down the overall deployment of technology. Setbacks that include increased vegetation beyond typical design standards can be a conflict or risk to electrical infrastructure. Adopting national standards will promote the highest level of safety and aid in the creation of a regional and statewide standard in approach.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on Proposed Ordinance No. O2026-526. Accommodating solar and BESS facilities will assist in accelerating a transition to clean and renewable electricity, consistent with State law and the County’s Sustainability 2030 plans. We appreciate the County’s commitment and priorities on decarbonization, safety, grid reliability, and creating local, union jobs.

Sincerely,

Christine Nhan  
Local Government Affairs Manager  
**PUGET SOUND ENERGY**

Casey MacLean  
Washington Policy Manager  
**RENEWABLE NORTHWEST**

Jared Ross  
Executive Secretary  
**SOUTH SOUND BUILDING &  
CONSTRUCTION TRADES  
COUNCIL, AFL-CIO**

Nathe Lawver  
Secretary–Treasurer  
**PIERCE COUNTY CENTRAL  
LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO**

Tosha Siebert  
Deputy General Manager – Power Delivery  
**TACOMA PUBLIC UTILITIES**

Clint Bryson  
Business Manager  
**IBEW 76**

John L. Adams  
Business Manager/Secretary–Treasurer  
**LIUNA LABORERS’ LOCAL 252**

Kevin A. Tedrick  
Business Manager  
**IUOE LOCAL 612**

CC: Pierce County Executive, Ryan Mello  
Pierce County Office of Resilience and Climate Action  
Pierce County Alliance for Sustainable Climate Action