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For Immediate Release

The Kittitas County Board of Commissioners has announced today their intentions to challenge the Governor's decision to approve the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project (KVVPP).

In making this decision the Board of County Commissioners has instructed the Prosecutor's Office to immediately file in Thurston County Superior Court an appeal of the Governor's decision. The Commissioners cited a number of reasons that they believed an appeal of the decision was appropriate, including the failure of the EFSEC board and the Governor to apply environmental documentation contained in the record regarding significant impacts, failure to properly mitigate demonstrated impacts of the project, failure to give deference and weight to land use decisions made by local elected officials, and failure to appropriately apply the relationship of the Growth Management Act to local land use decisions. In addition the Commissioners are questioning the involvement of representatives of certain state agencies whose departments had a financial interest in the final outcome of the decision yet failed to identify this conflict of interest and step down from the decision making process.

Explaining the Commissioners' decision Commission Chairman Alan Crankovich stated, "The Commissioners of Kittitas County do not enter into this decision to challenge the Governor's action lightly. For the first time in the history of the State of Washington the Governor has overturned a local land use decision. This is an extremely important issue not only to the citizens of Kittitas County but for the citizens throughout the state who rely on local elected officials to make land use decisions consistent with adopted Comprehensive Plans and local land use rules. Kittitas County reviewed this application in a manner consistent with our adopted Comprehensive Plan and land use rules. The decision of Kittitas County to deny this application was based on inadequate mitigation which allowed significant environmental impacts to remain."

Commissioner Bowen agreed and also stated "The final decision lacks authority to insure that this project benefits the citizens of the State of Washington. There is no requirement in the recommendation from EFSEC or the Governors decision to place the power generated from this facility to use for the citizens of the State. Further, the final decision offers no requirement for mitigation of identified significant impacts that were clearly expressed in the applicant's testimony and the Environmental Impact Statement developed for this proposal"

Commissioner McClain concluded that "GMA was intended to allow individual communities to plan based on their respective needs and circumstances. It is our belief that the citizens of Kittitas County, through their local elected officials, expressed their decision on this application and this proposed site very clearly. Kittitas County currently has the largest wind power project in the State of Washington up and running. This is not an action that is anti-wind power, rather it is an action on behalf of local government making land use decisions consistent with their adopted comprehensive plan."

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