

Kittitas County

Determination of Significance (DS) and

Request for Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Date of Issuance: April 16th, 2026

Lead Agency: Kittitas County, Community Development Services

Agency Contact: Ellie Myers, Planner I, Jamey Ayling, Planning Manager, Community Development Services, 509-962-7048, cleanenergy@co.kittitas.wa.us.

Description of Proposal:

Kittitas County is completing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate appropriate areas for permitting a variety of different energy uses. The energy uses being studied include solar, wind, geothermal, small modular reactors (SMRs), and battery storage systems (BESS). This project includes evaluating suitable zoning or areas within different zones, identifying environmental impacts, and appropriate mitigation at a programmatic level for different energy uses.

Kittitas County regulates energy facilities in [Kittitas County Code \(KCC\) 17.61 Utilities](#), including large-scale solar energy facilities, or solar farms, in [KCC 17.61C](#) and large-scale wind energy facilities, or wind farms, in [KCC 17.61A](#). This project may result in updating the permitting requirements in [KCC 17.61](#), the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, and/or locations and maps in which these facilities may be permitted as a result of the EIS.

This notice is specifically focused on the Environmental Impact Statement, which is a required part of the planning process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The EIS is a technical document that will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the clean energy alternatives being considered by Kittitas County.

Purpose of Project:

Kittitas County is completing this project to proactively address the siting of certain energy uses and strengthen opportunities for local evaluation and permitting of energy projects by establishing permitting pathways that are clear and predictable for certain energy uses, where these uses are appropriate, while also ensuring that permit processes properly evaluate and mitigate project impacts during construction, operation, and decommissioning. Where the County does not provide a permitting pathway or only allows uses in certain areas, applicants may still apply to permit uses through the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). More information about this is provided on the project website. Please see link below.

<https://efsec.wa.gov/>**Location of Proposal:** Kittitas County, including all unincorporated urban areas, rural lands, and natural resource lands.

Determination of Significance (DS) and EIS Required:

As the lead agency, Kittitas County has determined that this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under [RCW 43.21C.030 \(2\)\(c\)](#) and will be prepared.

Scoping Focus Areas:

As lead authority, Kittitas County has identified the following elements of the environment for discussion in the EIS:

- Earth Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Water Resources
- Biological Resources (species and habitats, including shrub steppe habitat)
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Environmental Justice, Impacted Communities, and Overburdened Communities
- Tribal Rights, Interests, and Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Land Use, including agricultural and ranching uses and military installations and operations
- Visual Quality
- Recreation
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Transportation
- Public Services and Utilities

The EIS will provide current conditions for the environmental factors above, followed by the impacts to these factors in the alternatives analysis. For each energy use, the affected environment, impacts, mitigation measures, and any significant unavoidable adverse impacts will be identified.

Alternatives:

A comparative evaluation of alternative courses of action will be included in the EIS. Kittitas County will study three alternatives as part of the EIS. Alternatives are anticipated to include a No Action Alternative and two-action alternatives that would consider approaches to siting criteria, clean energy uses, and mitigation and minimization measures. The following alternatives have been identified.

Alternative #1, **No Action Alternative**, as required under SEPA, assumes that energy development for solar, wind, battery energy storage systems (BESS), geothermal, and small modular reactors (SMR) would occur within Kittitas County based on the current development regulations with no changes. The current Kittitas County Code (KCC) sections relating to energy development are [KCC Chapter 17.61 Utilities](#), [KCC Chapter 17.61A Wind Farm Resource Overlay Zone](#), [KCC Chapter 17.61B Small Wind Energy Systems](#), and [KCC Chapter 17.61C Solar Power Production Facilities](#). The processes and development code standards currently

established in Kittitas County would be carried forward and any uses not permitted could be done through the permitting process established by the Washington State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC).

Alternative #2 will re-evaluate locations suitable and appropriate for utility scale solar and wind along with current permitting procedures. Current overlay locations ([KCC 17.61C.030 Solar Power Production Facilities Overlay Map](#) and [KCC 17.61A Wind Farm Overlay Zone](#)) may be modified based on findings. Additionally, significant environmental impacts associated with battery energy storage systems (BESS) will be assessed to determine suitable and appropriate locations in Kittitas County for BESS facilities. Where deemed appropriate, county permitting processes for utility scale solar, wind, and BESS may be modified to streamline the local permitting pathway and provide clear development standards with known mitigation measures.

Alternative #3 evaluates significant environmental impacts for geothermal energy facilities and small modular reactor facilities. The impacts associated with geothermal energy and small modular reactors will be assessed to determine suitable and appropriate locations in Kittitas County for geothermal energy facilities and small modular reactor facilities. Where deemed appropriate, county permitting processes may be modified to streamline the local permitting pathway and provide clear development standards with known mitigation measures.

It is anticipated that after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is issued, a Preferred Alternative will be selected from the range provided in the alternatives for the Final EIS (FEIS). Based upon the Preferred Alternative, the Kittitas County Comprehensive Plan, land use and zoning maps, and Kittitas County Code may be amended to reflect the Preferred Alternative.

Scoping:

Scoping provides notice to the public and other agencies that an EIS is being prepared, and initiates involvement in the process. There will be additional opportunities to comment on the DEIS once it is issued and any policy, code, or map changes which may be considered by Kittitas County in the future.

Agencies, affected Tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Comments on the EIS will be accepted on:

- EIS alternatives which should be considered,
- EIS elements of the environment,
- Probable significant adverse impacts,
- Minimization and mitigation measures, and
- Licenses or other approvals that may be required.

Scoping Events.

The County will have two opportunities on May 2nd, 2026 to learn more and ask questions.

Ellensburg Farmers Market, May 2nd from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

4th & Pearl Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926

Dru Bru – Cle Elum, May 2nd from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

1015 E 2nd Street, Cle Elum, WA 98922

These opportunities are designed to provide project background and information for those interested in submitting scoping comments. Participants can drop in anytime during the time periods provided above to discuss the EIS.

Comments:

The 30-day comment period is from **April 16, 2026 to May 18, 2026**. Written comments on the EIS can be submitted anytime prior to 5:00pm on May 18, 2026. Comments may be submitted by the following means:

Online Comments may be submitted via email to cleanenergy@co.kittitas.wa.us with the subject line: "EIS Scoping Comment"

Written Comments may be submitted via mail to the following address:

Reference:	Clean Energy Siting and Permitting EIS Scoping Comment
To:	Kittitas County Community Development Services
Address:	411 N Ruby ST, Suite 2 Ellensburg WA 98926

After reviewing the comments received during the scoping period, Kittitas County will finalize the alternatives and elements of the built and natural environment that will be analyzed under the EIS.

To learn more about the proposal, read frequently asked questions, see the project schedule, and how you can get involved and stay updated, please visit the project website at <https://www.co.kittitas.wa.us/cds/cesp.aspx>. This website will continue to be updated throughout the project.

Responsible Official:

Jamey Alying, Planning Manager Community Development Services

Kittitas County Community Development Services

411 N Ruby ST, Suite 2

Ellensburg WA 98926

Date: 4-14-26

Signature: 

Appeal Process: See [KCC Chapter 15A.04](#) and [WAC 197-11-680](#)