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# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

August 17, 2007

The Honorable Christine Gregoire  
Governor  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0100

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I write to express my concerns about last week's decision on the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project by the state agency staff comprising the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC). As you know, this is the first time in state history that this entity has endorsed siting a power facility over the lawful objections of a locally elected county government.

Let me state clearly that as Central Washington's Congressman, I have no authority or official role in this process. I respect that state law provides you sole decision-making authority as Governor. I am not asking for you to approve or deny the Council's recommendation, as that decision rests fully in your hands. I am simply writing to express my concerns about 1) state preemption of county and local community decision-making, and 2) the long-term implications that this decision could have in our state.

As a supporter of wind energy, I see great potential for its further development in Eastern Washington. A properly developed wind project can be integrated into a community with little controversy and generate new jobs and tax revenues in addition to clean, renewable energy. Of the six wind power farms in our state, every single one is located in Eastern Washington and each was built under appropriate local government jurisdiction.

It is not a matter of deciding whether wind power should be allowed in the county – Kittitas County already hosts the largest single wind project in the state. The question is under what circumstances the State of Washington would overrule the objections of a locally elected county government on a land-use planning issue.

I have great respect for the work of local county leaders to make the best decisions they can under the burden of often excessive and onerous state and federal government regulations. Ignoring or overriding these decisions should not be done lightly, and would send a clear signal that the local process is of no value.

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It is argued that the need for new sources of power, and renewable energy in particular, is reason enough to override a county and force construction of the project on the local community. We must be honest about the facts. Wind power projects have been and are being built under county jurisdiction. Wind farm construction is currently happening only in Eastern Washington, which already provides the vast majority of the power consumed by the rest of the state. The recently-passed renewable energy mandate – which came about after the Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project was denied by the Kittitas County commissioners and which was opposed by most voters in nearly every county in Eastern Washington – will inevitably necessitate building more wind generation, almost exclusively on the east side of the Cascades. Similar renewable mandates in California and other western states will only further drive up demand for wind development opportunities in Eastern Washington – and may result in our limited wind energy capacity being sent out of state to benefit others.

It is also true that there are many potential energy resources that may be developed in Washington that do not depend on wind availability and, therefore, could be built closer to urban population centers and reduce the need for transmission capacity. Should the state agency staff's recommendation be approved, I would hope that the same standard would be consistently applied in the future if a power plant was proposed for construction over the objections of a more populous county on the west side of the Cascades.

With a coming wave of wind power proposals, I ask you to give careful consideration to the potential implications of setting aside the lawful policies of locally elected officials – not only for future wind farm development, but also for power project siting in Washington generally.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial "D" and "H".

Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress