

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### ES.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2018, Lewis County initiated the environmental review of the Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project (the “Project”), proposed by Skookumchuck Wind Energy Project, LLC, a subsidiary of Renewable Energy Systems Inc. (the “Applicant”). The Project is a commercial wind farm capable of generating up to 137 megawatts (MW) of electricity proposed for development on an area of approximately 22,000 acres under a lease agreement in Lewis and Thurston counties.

This environmental review evaluates up to 38 wind turbine generators (WTGs) and associated Project support facilities, including an access road system, electrical collection lines, an onsite substation, meteorological towers, an operation and maintenance (O&M) Facility, and a 115 kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection (gen-tie) line from the Project substation to interconnect at Puget Sound Energy’s (PSE) electrical system at the Tono substation in Tono, Washington.

This FEIS is organized as follows:

**Chapter 1** summarizes the environmental review process conducted to date. Chapter 1 describes the purpose of this FEIS in the context of the analyses conducted by Lewis County to comply with SEPA. Refinements to the proposed action, along with a summary of coordination activities conducted with agencies and tribes, are also included.

**Chapter 2** of the FEIS provides updates and text revisions to the analysis of environmental impacts described in Chapter 3 (Sections 3.1 through 3.13) and the list of potentially required permits and approvals described in the Fact Sheet of the DEIS.

**Chapter 3** of the FEIS includes copies of written comments submitted to Lewis County, as well as responses to those comments prepared by the FEIS authors.

The remaining chapters and appendices of the FEIS provide updated supporting information for the EIS, as required by SEPA.

The DEIS and this FEIS make up the complete Environmental Impact Statement for this Project.

### ES.2 PROPOSED ACTION OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND NEED

As stated in the DEIS, the objective of the Proposed Action is to construct and operate a wind energy generation facility and associated infrastructure in Lewis and Thurston counties, Washington. The purpose of the Project is to generate renewable wind energy available for private and public utilities in order to meet the demands and need for renewable energy resources.

### ES.3 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES AND REVIEW

As stated in the DEIS, this document evaluates two alternatives: the Preferred Alternative (the Project) and the No Action Alternative. Several potential alternatives were considered during the development of this EIS but were not analyzed in detail because they were not deemed reasonable, or they did not meet the Project objectives. The direct and indirect Project impacts are addressed, as well as the cumulative impacts of other reasonably foreseeable projects in the two-county area. Impacts of the

Project are evaluated for the construction, project facilities' operations and maintenance, and decommissioning stages of the Project.

One of the results of environmental review is the development of potential mitigation measures whose implementation may avoid or reduce impacts to the built and natural environment, as well as help identify significant unavoidable impacts that cannot be mitigated. Mitigation measures recommended in an EIS are one tool the Applicant uses to refine the ultimate selection of individual Project features.

As described in the analyses presented in the DEIS, the Applicant used a number of key criteria to design the proposed Project layout. The Applicant conducted numerous surveys and studies to determine the presence of protected natural resources. The Applicant developed the proposed Project layout based on optimizing Project performance while avoiding and minimizing impacts to protected resources, and mitigating impacts as required by applicable regulations and guidance. WTGs, access roads, below-ground medium voltage collection cables, and the above-ground gen-tie line have been established within micrositing corridors. Micrositing corridors provide an area of 100 to 300 feet of the preliminary design to allow the Applicant to conduct studies that can identify the constraints within a defined area during the development process. This information then provides a better opportunity for the Applicant to balance a number of technical, environmental, and engineering factors, including limitations posed by the terrain; wind data (speed, wind shear, etc.); feasibility of access; setbacks (internally established or based on permit requirements); geotechnical considerations (subsurface conditions); environmental restrictions (avoidance of sensitive habitat); cultural/archeological restrictions (avoidance of cultural resource sites); telecommunications constraints (line of sight microwave paths); Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requirements; and other site-specific criteria. As the Project gets closer to construction, the engineering will be optimized, and locations of infrastructure may change very slightly based on safety needs or other constraints, as well as economical savings. However, the Applicant will locate all such facilities within the micrositing corridors that have been assessed and approved in applicable land use and environmental permits, which are addressed in the DEIS and this FEIS.

#### **ES.4 AREAS OF INTEREST AND ISSUES THAT WERE CONSIDERED IN THE ANALYSIS**

Public scoping identified the following areas of interest to be considered in the DEIS: earth resources (geologic hazards, including landslides and severe erosion); water resources (year-round and seasonal streams and wetlands); biological resources (vegetation, plants, habitat, avian species in general, and marbled murrelet and eagles); noise; visual resources; historical and cultural resources; transportation; and public services and utilities.

#### **ES.5 MITIGATION MEASURES AND SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS**

The DEIS presented a summary table of all recommended mitigation measures. This table has been revised and updated to reflect additional mitigation measures suggested by the EIS authors to mitigate for the impacts presented in the DEIS, and otherwise raised in the comments received. As in the DEIS, major mitigation measures discussed in the table are reasonably calculated to reduce, at times eliminate, and in several instances, enhance the impacts of the Project to the built and natural environment.

The mitigation measures presented in this analysis have been summarized in Table 1.6-1. The mitigation measures listed in Table 1.6-1 are both inherent in Project design and for reduction of impacts. Revisions to existing mitigation measures or new mitigation measures are indicated in this table using the following formatting:

Deletions are indicated by text that has been stricken (for example "~~deleted~~"). Additions are indicated by underlining the new text (for example "new text").

As described in the DEIS, avoidance will continue to be utilized to prevent many types of impacts from occurring in the first instance, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be applied to minimize impacts where appropriate. Application of all of these measures, following the micro-siting of the Project elements within permitting corridors, will limit and in most instances, eliminate the adverse impacts of the Project.