

Written Testimony by – Kathi Pritchard

EFSEC Land-Use Suitability Hearing – December 12, 2017

Columbia Solar Project – Tuusso

Project Tracking Code 2017-05-03441

Testimony:

Good evening. I am Kathi Pritchard, a local resident.

The state is at a crossroads. The agricultural investment throughout the state would be diminished and a serious precedent would be made if this Council approves this application to convert prime irrigated farmland to utility-scale energy production.

“Agriculture is woven into the fabric of Washington State’s heritage...” according to the state Department of Commerce website.

Governor Inslee supports this fact through his goals to “grow the agriculture sector”. Among his five goals listed on the state Commerce website are:

- **protecting scarce resources: land, water, and labor**
- **harnessing emerging opportunities in organic, sustainable and local farming**

Kittitas County is home to a thriving farm economy, ranging from small family farms to nationally ranked export operations, and new crops being developed every year.

According to 2012 USDA figures, Kittitas County farm economy exceeded \$68 million dollars.

The state’s Export Assistance program cites Anderson Hay & Grain, a “Success Stories” through its ventures to export hay and grain to the Middle East.

Kittitas Valley is also home to innovative growers in apples and organics.

Just this year, Yakima- based Zirkle Fruit planted 600,000 trees this year on 600 acres in the lower Kittitas Valley and have plans to plant up to 1.5 million trees.

https://www.dailyrecordnews.com/news/new-apple-varieties-and-new-orchards-come-to-kittitas/article_28902fb2-9267-5623-bfd7-f6eeacaf643e.html

A family- owned organic seed company also calls this county home, farming “about 150 certified organic acres”. These are just three farming success stories for our county. These and many more could be adversely affected if this application is approved.

If approved, the proposed project would likely begin a drain on the number of irrigated acres available in our county and state since 18 projects seeking similar acreage are waiting in the wings. As proposed these projects are not in harmony with the Governor’s stated goals to protect scarce resources of land, water and labor and encourage emerging innovations in sustainable farming.

Yet the choice does not have to be between farms and renewable energy. Over 18,000 acres of non-irrigated land and DNR trust land meet developers criteria for siting. And site on Trust land would fund K-12 schools in the state.

The loss of prime irrigated farmland may stunt agriculture innovation and economic growth for longer than the 30 years of the proposed project’s timeline.

I’d like to finish with a quote from Donald Chance an expert in land use:

“A key component to judge the environmental and community impacts associated with the decision in the SEPA analysis is that of the “cumulative effects” associated with any precedent that would be set. The cumulative effect of the decision would likely result in dozens of similar projects on this same high value conservation resource. In short, the decision does have the very real potential to undermine the local resource base and economy.”

Thank you.

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Roselyn Marcus, EFSEC Chair

Council Members

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According to the Department of Commerce, "Agriculture is woven into the fabric of Washington State's heritage and has been an important part of our culture since the earliest days of territorial settlement." Department of Commerce website, retrieved December 12, 2017.

"Washington's 35,900 farms power a diverse agricultural economy, led by the state's apple industry that accounts for 70 percent of U.S. production." Department of Commerce website, retrieved December 12, 2017.

The Department of Commerce prominently feature Governor Inslee's goals to grow the agriculture sector. Two of the goals include:

- Harnessing emerging opportunities in organic, sustainable and local farming and
- protecting scarce resources: land, water, and labor

The Governor's goals are underscored by the investment in Commerce's Export Assistance program.

The Kittitas Valley is the home of Anderson Hay and Grain which is featured a Washington State "Export Assistance Success Story".

Governor Inslee's Goals to Grow the Agriculture Sector include:

- **Harness emerging opportunities: organic, sustainable and local;** food security; bio-digesters; climate change; multi-year farm bills passed by Congress.
- Enable more efficient movement of time-sensitive agricultural goods through policy actions and infrastructure development.
- Eliminate regulatory barriers.
- **Protect** and manage **scarce resources: land, water,** energy, labor, capital and credit.
- Strengthen support services: transportation, technology, education and marketing.

Source: Washington Department of Commerce: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/key-sectors/agriculture-food-manufacturing/> (retrieved 12/12/17; Note: some bold emphasis added)

Department of Commerce Export Assistance Success Story

The Kittitas Valley is the home of Anderson Hay and Grain which is featured a Washington State "Export Assistance Success Story", <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/export-assistance/success-stories/> (retrieved 12/12/17)

"Businesses across the state of Washington have been discovering the exciting growth opportunities in the global marketplace. With the support of the Washington State Department of Commerce, many businesses have begun successfully exporting their products to new foreign markets."

— Anderson Hay and Grain

Over the last several generations, Anderson Hay & Grain Co., inc. has become the leading exporter of hay and straw products, specializing in timothy hay, alfalfa hay and grass straw products. Customers from Asia to the Middle East prize the company's hay and grain products.

Exporting forms the foundation of Anderson Hay & Grain's business, and the company ranks as one of the top 50 exporters in the United States! The company's nimbleness, openness to new ideas, and strategically-based port facilities near the Port of Tacoma and the Port of Seattle enabled the company to export efficiently and build a broad customer base overseas.

<http://www.commerce.wa.gov/growing-the-economy/export-assistance/success-stories/> (retrieved 12/12/17)

The Commerce website notes that "the company ranks in the top 50 exporters in the United States!"

Hay and Grain have a worldwide impact:

Anderson Hay Enters Joint Venture to Distribute Forage Products in the UAE and GCC

Abu Dhabi, UAE; 10 April 2017:

Anderson Hay & Grain Co., Inc., the number one hay exporter from the USA, will enter a joint venture (JV) with Agthia Group, the market leader for animal feed in the UAE. This partnership was announced, and a JV agreement was signed at the AgraME Show on April 10, 2017.

A new company is being formed, which will primarily be importing Anderson's premium forage products from the USA, to be distributed in the UAE and the GCC. The products will be sold under the new JV product brand, AgriVita Marabe, which translates to "green fields." Through the JV, Anderson will have a solid presence in the Middle East.

Mark T. Anderson, the CEO and the President of Anderson Hay and Grain Co., Inc., said: "Anderson Hay & Grain is proud to be in the UAE and the Gulf in partnership with Agthia. Our joint venture joins two industry leaders, focused on quality products, strong relationships and customer service. We aspire to be the preferred forage provider to customers in the Middle East."

Mike Trua, Anderson CMO added: "This new initiative complements the global presence of Anderson Hay & Grain as we expand our business through key strategic partnerships with regional industry leaders. We have strong results in Japan, Korea, and China, and through our JV with Agthia, will serve customers and lead the market in the GCC and Middle East."

HE Eng Dhafer Ayed Al Ahbabi, Agthia Chairman, said: "Our combined strength will provide a solid supply and distribution alternative in the UAE and the GCC markets that would be difficult to achieve working independently."

Tariq Al Wahedi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Agthia, added: "At the roots of this company lies animal feed. This joint venture is another step in this direction, complementing our existing animal feed portfolio and providing a full-service solution to our livestock customers in the UAE."

Both companies are well aligned and committed to supporting the farming industry as well as the food security of the UAE and GCC region by providing superior quality feed solutions for livestock.

Source: Anderson Hay & Grain website: <https://www.anderson-hay.com/news>

Locally sourced farm to table food movement

Like the Governor, the Washington State Farm Bureau also recognizes the importance of emerging agricultural trends based on consumers' demands for fresh, local and sustainable foods. This interactive online tool underscores the importance of this consumer demand trend to food growers and the state's thriving food and beverage producers across the state from cheese.

Farm Fresh



Get the best food and drink in Washington!

This is a Washington lifestyle tool to help you *quickly* find the best food and drink in Washington! Remember to check out this link when deciding what to do when hanging out with friends, planning a weekend getaway, or locally sourcing the best food and drink in your table!

Join the farm to table movement

Eat fresh—be happy.

Artisan Cheesemakers



Beef Producers



Cider Makers



Source: Washington Farm Bureau website: <http://wsfb.com/farm-fresh/>, retrieved 12/12/17