



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
ENERGY FACILITY SITE EVALUATION COUNCIL  
*PO Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250*

**MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE**  
Pursuant to Chapter 463-47 WAC and WAC 197-11-350  
For the Columbia Solar Project

**Date of Issuance:** February 27, 2018

**Lead Agency:** Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC)

**Agency Contact:** Sonia Bumpus, [sonia.bumpus@utc.wa.gov](mailto:sonia.bumpus@utc.wa.gov) (360) 664-1363

**Agency File Number:** EFSEC Application No. 2017-01

**Description of Proposal:** The Columbia Solar Project is an alternative energy proposal by TUUSSO Energy, LLC. The proposed Columbia Solar Application for Site Certification (ASC) proposes to construct five new photovoltaic (PV) facilities at five site locations (named Camas, Fumaria, Penstemon, Typhya, and Urtica) in Kittitas County, Washington. Two generation tie lines would also be constructed to connect the Fumaria and Typha locations. Each new PV solar array would be capable of providing up to 5 megawatts (MW) of solar energy within the Puget Sound Energy (PSE) service area, for a total of 25 MW of electrical power generation. The five solar arrays and two generation tie lines would be constructed on 200 of approximately 232 leased acres, in close proximity to existing PSE electrical infrastructure.

**Location of Proposal:** Kittitas County, Washington

**Applicant:** TUUSSO Energy, LLC. (206) 303-0198

**SEPA Threshold Determination:** EFSEC has issued a Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS) under WAC 197-11-350 based on a determination that the enclosed mitigating conditions, along with required compliance with applicable county, state and federal regulations and permit requirements will mitigate all adverse impacts on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This determination was made after review of a completed Environmental Checklist and other information on file with the lead agency and existing regulations applicable to the proposal (see attached memo from EFSEC staff). The Environmental Checklist is attached and the ASC is available at the EFSEC website:

[http://www.efsec.wa.gov/Tuusso\\_Solar/Tuusso\\_Application.html](http://www.efsec.wa.gov/Tuusso_Solar/Tuusso_Application.html).

**Mitigating Conditions:**

Resource	Impact	Mitigation
Water	Flow path disruption in floodplains	(1) Prior to construction, TUUSSO will provide final construction and micrositing plans to EFSEC showing that structures (including roads and fences) placed within floodplains are designed so as to not restrict or redirect flows from their natural flow path. If impervious surfaces such as roads are placed in the floodplain, measures will be taken to mitigate for the lack of floodplain storage.
	Riparian habitat	(2) Prior to construction, TUUSSO will provide final construction and micrositing plans to EFSEC that apply a 100-foot minimum setback from Type F (fish-bearing) streams in the Project sites, including the Yakima River, as well as compliance with updated (draft) Kittitas County Critical Areas Ordinances for the protection of riparian areas.  (3) Further, TUUSSO will compensate for habitat impacts of the Project by submitting a plan for EFSEC approval detailing riparian habitat enhancement within the 100-foot buffers adjacent to fish-bearing streams. The plan will include, at a minimum, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TUUSSO will plant native riparian plants (including shrubs) within the riparian area buffers where current vegetation has been reduced or eliminated from agricultural practices.</li> <li>• TUUSSO will establish benchmarks and timeline for revegetation success, and monitor revegetation activities in the riparian areas to ensure success.</li> </ul>
	Wetland impacts during construction	(4) Prior to construction, TUUSSO will provide plans to EFSEC for coordination with Ecology to conduct additional wetlands surveys and identification of hydrologic features at each site.  (5) Further, TUUSSO will compensate for habitat impacts of the Project by submitting a plan for EFSEC approval detailing buffer zones and/or any required compensatory mitigation as identified through coordination with EFSEC and Ecology.
	Resources	(6) Tuusso will arrange for water rights not in use after the establishment of irrigated vegetation to be donated to a trust, consistent with RCW 90.14.140(2)(h) and RCW 90.42.080 to ensure that current rights would be retained by land owners for the life of the facility.
Wildlife	Disturbance of nesting birds during construction	(7) TUUSSO will survey all Project sites for nesting raptors and great blue heron in the spring of each year of construction, and if found to be active, establish the following seasonal work avoidance buffers (in addition to those proposed by TUUSSO in the SEPA Environmental Checklist): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0.25-mile avoidance buffer during nesting season for raptors. If construction near active raptor nests might occur during the critical use period, TUUSSO will consult with EFSEC and local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) biologists for appropriate mitigation or monitoring.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0.25-mile avoidance buffer from February through May for great blue heron.</li> </ul>
	Hazards to birds during construction and operation	<p>(8) TUUSSO will develop an Avian Protection Plan (APP) in consultation with EFSEC, USFWS, and WDFW prior to construction that specifies mitigation or monitoring for impacts to birds from the Project, with particular attention to Birds of Conservation Concern known or likely to occur in the Project area. The APP will include, at a minimum, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TUUSSO will follow measures listed in Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) guidelines for new electrical poles installed for the Project. If the APLIC guidelines are not feasible on a pole location, TUUSSO will present the reasons to EFSEC and determine appropriate mitigation or monitoring measures.</li> <li>TUUSSO will avoid avian attraction to solar panels (birds may attempt to land on panels due to "lake effect") by planting vegetation around panels, adding patterns to panels, or using other strategies to reduce the risk of avian collisions.</li> </ul>
	Hazards to wildlife during construction and operation	(9) TUUSSO will install fencing at all site locations at a minimum of eight feet in height, with a single line of barbed wire installed at the top of the fence. Razor wire will not be used in Project fencing.
Historic and Cultural Preservation	Resource disturbance or degradation during construction	(10) Prior to construction, TUUSSO, in consultation with EFSEC and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), will provide final construction and micrositing plans and plans for avoidance of impacts to resources.

**Public Comment:** Comments on this MDNS and the environmental impacts of this proposal must be submitted by March 13, 2018 no later than 5 pm.

Comments can be submitted electronically online by visiting the EFSEC website: [http://www.efsec.wa.gov/Tuusso\\_Solar.html](http://www.efsec.wa.gov/Tuusso_Solar.html). Once on EFSEC's website go to the Columbia Solar MDNS page.

Written comments can be submitted by mail to:  
The Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council  
PO Box 47250  
Olympia, WA 98504-7250

**Responsible Official:** Stephen Posner, EFSEC Manager, [Stephen.posner@utc.wa.gov](mailto:Stephen.posner@utc.wa.gov), (360)664-1903

Signature Stephen Posner  
(electronic signature or name of signor is sufficient)

Date 2/27/2018