

Focus on: Clean Energy Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements

The Washington Legislature directed the Department of Ecology to evaluate potential impacts and mitigation for three types of clean energy facilities using the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). These evaluations will also include collocated battery storage systems.

- Utility-scale solar energy
- Utility-scale onshore wind energy
- Green hydrogen

What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (also called a PEIS) is a planning document used to review nonprojects, such as comprehensive plans or rulemaking. It is not done for a specific project. Instead, a PEIS considers potential significant adverse environmental impacts at a broad level. It also identifies possible ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts. For the clean energy programmatic EIS documents, utility-scale solar, onshore wind energy and green hydrogen facility types are being analyzed. For individual projects, a lead agency is still required to do a SEPA environmental review.

A PEIS does:



- Provide a review at a broad level
- Analyze potential impacts
- Look at ways to avoid impacts through siting and project design
- Identify possible mitigation
- Provide consistent information

A PEIS does NOT:



- Approve or deny a project
- Evaluate a specific project
- Analyze a specific location
- Take away any state or local agency authorities

What will be evaluated?

Each PEIS will analyze probable adverse significant environmental impacts on:

- Natural environment including earth, air, water, plants, animals, natural resources, environmental health and safety
- Built environment including land use, noise, visual quality, recreation, transportation, public services and utilities. Land use will include military and agricultural uses.
- Tribal rights, interests, and resources and historic and cultural resources
- Protected and endangered species and landscape scale habitat and migration corridors
- Environmental justice and overburdened communities

What geographic areas will be included in the studies?

- The scoping phase looks statewide. Based on input during scoping, Ecology will consider the broad areas where the types of clean energy facilities might be built. This will be based on data such as the amount of wind or solar energy available, slopes and soil conditions. Each draft PEIS will then conduct analysis using these geographic areas.

What are the steps in developing a PEIS?



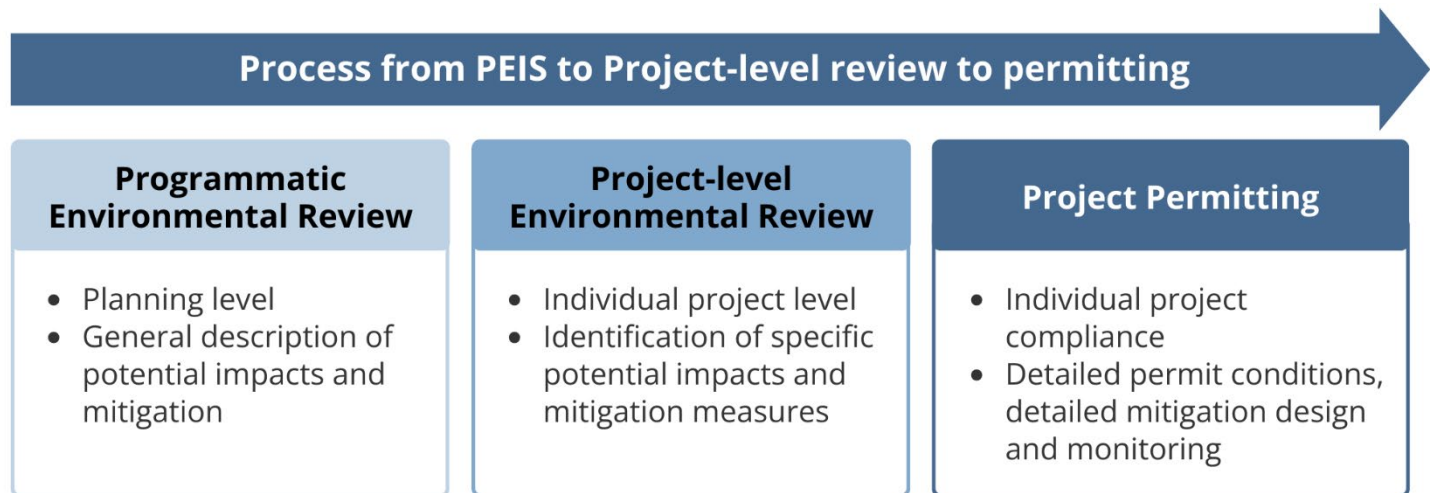
How will a clean energy PEIS be used?

Project applicants can use a clean energy PEIS to design their proposals and choose a site to avoid and minimize impacts at the start. They can also use a PEIS to develop mitigation plans. State law now requires a SEPA lead agency to consider a PEIS if it is relevant for a proposed project. Local and state permitting agencies can use it for their decision-making. Tribes, agencies, and the public can use a PEIS as an information source.

How can I be involved in the development of the PEISs?

There will be a public comment period during scoping and another for the draft PEIS. Ecology will request input from the public, industry, Tribes, and agencies. Ecology will also offer consultation to potentially affected Tribes and engage with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations.

To be notified and receive updates, sign up for the [clean energy coordination email list](#).



Related Information

- [Programmatic EIS webpage](#)
- [SEPA Frequently Asked Questions](#)



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