



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

June 30, 2025

Dear Interested Parties,

In 2023, the Washington State Legislature directed the state Department of Ecology (Ecology) to conduct a study to assess and disclose probable significant adverse environmental impacts from utility-scale solar energy facilities. Revised Code of Washington [43.21C.535](#) also requires the report evaluate measures to avoid and reduce likely impacts.

Ecology is issuing this Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to provide consistent and useful information that the public, local and state agencies, Tribes, and developers can use to help review and plan for utility-scale solar energy facilities. A PEIS is a type of environmental review used for planning; it is not an evaluation of a specific project. Each utility-scale solar energy project will need a separate project-level review.

Utility-scale solar energy facilities help support the state's transition to clean energy. When electricity from a solar energy facility replaces the electricity generated by an existing fossil fuel-based facility, it helps reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions in Washington. However, utility-scale solar energy facilities may have adverse environmental impacts. This PEIS evaluates, at a broad level, different types of solar energy facilities to identify probable environmental impacts and ways to avoid and reduce those impacts.

The PEIS evaluates the following types of utility-scale solar energy facilities as well as a No Action Alternative:

- **Utility-scale solar facilities:** solar energy facilities capable of generating between 20 and 1,200 megawatts of energy on sites between 200 to 12,000 acres in size.
- **Utility-scale solar facilities with battery energy storage systems:** facilities that also include one or two battery energy storage systems, each capable of storing up to 500 megawatts of energy.
- **Utility-scale solar facilities that include agricultural uses:** dual-use facilities with agriculture and solar energy facility operations.

Ecology is providing information at three different levels of detail. The PEIS summary includes an overview of the findings. The PEIS document includes more information on potential impacts and mitigation actions. The appendices include detailed and technical evaluations of resources. The following resource areas are evaluated in the PEIS:

- Aesthetics and visual quality
- Air quality and greenhouse gases
- Biological resources
- Earth resources

- Energy and natural resources
- Environmental health and safety
- Environmental justice and impacts to overburdened communities
- Historic and cultural resources
- Land use
- Noise and vibration
- Public services and utilities
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal rights, interests, and resources
- Water resources

Potential impacts on environmental resources associated with constructing, operating, and decommissioning utility-scale solar energy facilities are analyzed in the PEIS. The findings identify resources where significant impacts are not likely as well as resources that could be significantly impacted. The study also considers cumulative impacts.

The PEIS identifies measures to avoid, reduce, and mitigate potential environmental impacts from a utility-scale solar energy project. In many cases, mitigation measures can reduce potential adverse impacts to a less-than-significant level. In other cases, mitigation measures may reduce impacts, but not necessarily to a level below significance. Mitigation approaches will depend on the specific project and site.

The study can help a developer choose a suitable site, design a project, and submit a proposal that has considered potential environmental impacts. State and local agencies must consider the information in the PEIS, as well as other publicly available information and site-specific details, to inform their environmental reviews and permitting decisions.

The Draft PEIS was published on September 25, 2024. Comments on the Draft PEIS were accepted during a 33-day comment period (September 25 through October 28, 2024). Ecology conducted public notice and outreach activities to notify Tribes, agencies, members of the public, and interested parties of the public comment period and to announce public hearing dates. Comments received on the Draft PEIS during the public comment period were considered by Ecology in the preparation of the Final PEIS.

Questions about the PEIS or process may be directed to Diane Butorac at [diane.butorac@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:diane.butorac@ecy.wa.gov) or (360) 407-6600.

Sincerely,



Diane Butorac  
SEPA Responsible Official  
Clean Energy Coordination Section, Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program  
Washington State Department of Ecology