



**North Central Regional Solutions Advisory Committee Minutes**

**December 18, 2018**

Meeting Location: Columbia Gorge Community College, 400 East Scenic Drive  
Lecture Hall, Building 2, Third Floor,  
10:00 AM –12:30 PM

<p><b>Advisory Committee Members in Attendance</b> Mike McArthur (Convener) Rod Runyon (AOC Representative) Steve Lawrence (LOC Representative) Celeste Hill-Thomas (Philanthropic Representative) Amanda Hoey, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District Gary Thompson, Sherman County Keith Mobley Rich McBride, Hood River County Ken Bailey, Agriculture Representative Maui Meyer, Copper-West Properties</p>	<p><b>Guests/Stakeholder</b> Marta Yera Cornin, Columbia Gorge Community College Lisa Farquharson, The Dalles Chamber of Commerce Carol Von Borstel, City of Grass Valley Elizabeth Farrar, Gilliam County John Huffman, USDA Rural Development Rich Mays, The Dalles Lyn Ewing, Maupin Scott Hege, Wasco County Heather Fitch, East Cascade West Workforce Investment Board Tyler Stone, Wasco County</p>
<p><b>Regional Solutions Team Members/Staff in attendance</b> Carolyn Meece, Business Oregon Greg Svelund, DEQ Erick Garman, ODA Brad DeHart, ODOT Shanna Bailey, Business Oregon Nate Stice, Governor’s Office Elana Pirtle-Guiney, Governor’s Office</p>	<p>Colleen Coleman, Mosier Arlene Burns, Mosier Steve Shaffer, Gilliam County Mark Johnson, Port of Cascade Locks Representative Daniel Bonham Senator Chuck Thomsen Joe Dabulskis, Sherman County Gordon Zimmerman, Cascade Locks Don Coates, Community Renewable Energy Association Joel Madsen, Mid-Columbia Housing Authority Kathy Ursprung, Port of The Dalles Matthew Klebes, The Dalles Rachael Fuller, City of Hood River Peter Cornelison, Friend of the Gorge Brian Walsh, Avangrid</p>

**10:05 am**

**Call to order and introductions**

Mike McArthur call the meeting to order and does a round of introductions



**10:10 am**

**Action Item: Committee Appointments**

The committee charter calls for a higher education representative and one city representative for each county.

- The higher education seat is typically filled by the Columbia Gorge Community College President, and the committee invited new CGCC President Marta Yera Cronin to join the Advisory Committee. Celeste Hill-Thomas moved to formally add Dr. Cronin to the committee. Keith Mobley seconded. The committee approved unanimously.
- The Sherman County Commission recommend Grass Valley City Manager Carol Von Borstel as the Sherman County City representative. Keith Mobley moved to appoint Von Borstel. Meyer seconded. The committee unanimously approved the appointment.

**10:20 am**

**Legislative session preview**

The committee annually invites area legislators and a larger group of stakeholders to discuss the upcoming legislative session. This year committee was joined by Senators Chuck Thomsen and Cliff Bentz (by phone), Representative Daniel Bonham and Representative-Elect Anna Williams. Elana Pirtle-Guiney, Governor Brown's Legislative Director, also joined the group. Each provided a five minute update on their priorities for the session. Several economic develop and local priorities were highlighted:

- Pirtle Guiney highlighted the \$400 million in the Governor's Recommended Budget for housing, including \$15 million for workforce housing. She also spoke about the \$15 million proposed for the Regional Infrastructure Fund in the Governor's Budget
- Several legislators spoke about their work on carbon policy
- All spoke about education funding
- Sen Chuck Thomsen and Rep.-Elect Anna Williams spoke about the importance of funding for search and rescue operations.

**11:20 am**

**Regulatory focus: Renewable Energy Facility Siting**

The Advisory Committee has expressed an interest in exploring regulatory barriers to key industries. Renewable energy, including wind and solar, continue to play an important role in the region with new projects coming online in Wasco and Sherman County. The committee invited two companies to speak about their projects and experience:

Brian Walsh joined the advisory committee from Avangrid, a renewables company working on both wind and solar with several project moving forward in Wasco, Sherman, and Gilliam County. According to Brian, demand for renewable is growing, driven by among other thing, data center requesting 100 renewable energy. One biggest barriers to expansion is transmission congestion. BPA is doing a good job with existing infrastructure, but it is not enough to support the full renewable capability of the region. Brian also spoke about the challenge in moving projects through Oregon Department of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Commission (EFSC). He offered an example of one project where navigating the EFSC took two years and over a million dollars. Local permitting can often accomplish the same thing in 6-9 months. He spoke about



several efforts moving forward this session to look at giving counties jurisdiction and in changing the thresholds that trigger EFSC approval vs. a traditional land use process.

Erik Steimle of National Grid spoke to the Advisory Committee about their efforts to site a large pumped storage project in Goldendale, WA on the site of a former aluminum smelter. Pumped storage projects facilities are rare in the US. The proposed facility in Goldendale would provide 25,506 MWh of storage, helping to capture more of the energy produced by renewable energy facilities in the region. The project would cost a total of \$2.1 billion. Erik highlighted two challenges: 1) The Balkanization of the Integrated Resource Planning Process conducted by utilities that make it challenging to work across utilities; and 2) the lack of focus on regional solutions. He suggested that Oregon could work more on advancing its own renewable resource and in integrating with California.

The committee discussed next steps and potentially inviting some of the regulatory agencies to the next advisory committee meeting.

**12:10 pm**

**Committee Member Roundtable and Public Comment**

Committee members offered updates. No public comment was offered.