

Skagit County

Determination of Significance (DS) and

Request for Comments on Scope of Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

Date of Issuance: May 14th, 2026

Lead Agency: Skagit County, Planning and Development Services

Agency Contact: Robby Eckroth, AICP, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Services, (360) 416-1320, reckroth@co.skagit.wa.us.

Description of Proposal:

Skagit County is completing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation for siting and regulating clean energy uses. The energy uses being studied include solar energy facilities, battery energy storage facilities, small modular nuclear facilities, and renewable fuel facilities.

Skagit County currently regulates energy facilities as Utility Developments in Skagit County Code (SCC) 14.18.870. This project may result in updating Skagit County Code and/or the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan, to identify locations in which these facilities may be permitted, along with permit application requirements, permit process, criteria for application approval, required studies, and mitigation or performance standards for energy types.

This notice is specifically focused on scoping for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The purpose of scoping is to narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues, to eliminate insignificant impacts from detailed study, and to identify alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS. The EIS is a technical document that will evaluate the potential significant environmental impacts of the energy uses being considered by Skagit County.

Additional project details are available at the link below.

<https://www.skagitcounty.net/CESP>

Location of Proposal: Skagit County, including all unincorporated urban and rural areas and natural resource lands.

Determination of Significance (DS) and EIS Required:

As the lead agency, Skagit County has determined that this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under [RCW 43.21C.030 \(2\)\(c\)](#).

Scoping Focus Areas:

As lead authority, Skagit County has identified the following elements of the environment for discussion in the EIS:

- Earth Resources

- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases
- Water Resources
- Biological Resources (species and habitats)
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Impacts on Overburdened Communities
- Tribal Rights, Interests, and Resources
- Noise and Vibration
- Land Use, including agricultural and ranching uses and military installations and operations
- Visual Quality
- Recreation
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Human Health and Safety
- Transportation
- Public Services and Utilities

The EIS will evaluate current conditions for the environmental factors above, followed by potential impacts to these factors in the alternatives analysis. For each alternative, the affected environment, impacts, mitigation measures, and any significant unavoidable adverse impacts will be identified.

Alternatives:

A comparative evaluation of alternative courses of action will be included in the EIS. Skagit County anticipates studying two alternatives as part of the EIS. Alternatives are anticipated to include the No Action Alternative and an action alternative that would consider siting criteria, energy uses, and mitigation and minimization measures. The following alternatives have been identified.

Alternative 1– No Action Alternative. Evaluates how energy development for solar energy facilities, battery energy storage facilities, small nuclear reactors, and renewable fuel facilities would occur within Skagit County based on the current development regulations with no changes. The development code standards and permitting processes currently established in Skagit County would be carried forward.

Alternative 2 – Action Alternative. Evaluates potentially significant environmental impacts for solar energy facilities, battery energy storage facilities, small nuclear reactors, and renewable fuel facilities. The impacts associated with these uses will be assessed to determine appropriate locations, zones, significant adverse impacts, and mitigation and minimization measures. Where deemed appropriate, county permitting processes may be modified to streamline the local permitting pathway and provide clear development standards with known mitigation measures.

It is anticipated that after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is issued, the information presented will inform the selection of a Preferred Alternative from the range

provided for the Final EIS (FEIS). Based upon the Preferred Alternative, the Skagit County Comprehensive Plan and/or Skagit County Code may be amended to reflect the Preferred Alternative.

Scoping:

The purpose of scoping is to narrow the focus of the EIS to significant environmental issues, to eliminate insignificant impacts from detailed study, and to identify alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS. Scoping provides notice to the public and other agencies that an EIS is being prepared, and initiates involvement in the process. There will be additional opportunities to comment on the DEIS once it is issued and any policy, code, or map changes which may be considered by Skagit County in the future.

Agencies, Tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. EIS scoping comments will be accepted on:

- EIS alternatives which should be considered,
- EIS elements of the environment,
- Probable significant adverse impacts,
- Minimization and mitigation measures, and
- Licenses or other approvals that may be required.

Scoping Open House.

The County will hold three Open Houses for the scoping comment period. The time, dates, and locations are found below:

June 9th, 2026

Anacortes, 1:00PM to 3:00PM
Depot Arts and Community Center
611 R Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

Mount Vernon, 5:30PM to 7:30PM
Skagit County Administration Building
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

June 10th, 2026

Concrete, 5:30PM to 7:30PM
Concrete Community Center
45821 Railroad Ave
Concrete, WA 98237

The open houses are designed to provide project background and information for those interested in submitting scoping comments. There will be no formal presentation or oral testimony at the open houses. Participants can drop in anytime during the event dates/times above to learn more and ask questions. If attendees wish to provide comment at the open houses, scoping comment forms will be available. Attendees may submit scoping comments forms during the open house or mail the forms in to the address listed below by June 16, 2026.

Comments:

The 30-day comment period is from **May 14, 2026 to June 16, 2026**. Written comments on the EIS can be submitted anytime prior to 4:30pm on June 16th, 2026. Comments may be submitted by the following means:

Online Comments may be submitted via email to PDScomments@co.skagit.wa.us with the subject line: "Energy Siting and Permitting EIS Scoping Comment"

Written Comments may be submitted via mail to the following address:

Reference:	Energy Siting and Permitting EIS Scoping Comment
To:	Planning and Development Services
Address:	1800 Continental Place Mount Vernon WA 98273

After reviewing the comments received during the scoping period, Skagit County will finalize the alternatives and elements of the built and natural environment that will be analyzed under the EIS.

To learn more about the proposal, read frequently asked questions, see the project schedule, and how you can get involved and stay updated, please visit the project website at <https://www.skagitcounty.net/CESP>. This website will continue to be updated throughout the project.

SEPA Responsible Official:

Jack Moore, Director
Planning and Development Services
1800 Continental Place
Mount Vernon WA 98273

Date of Determination: May 14, 2026

Appeal Process: Pursuant to [SCC 16.12.210](#), no administrative appeal process is available for this DS on this non-project action. Appeals may be filed with the Western Washington Growth Management Hearings Board, following final Board of County Commissioner action on the proposal.