

Southwest Clean Air Agency

Board of Directors Minutes

March 7, 2024

The regular meeting of the Southwest Clean Air Agency Board of Directors was held in the Southwest Clean Air Agency office, Vancouver, Washington on March 7, 2024.

Those present were: Dr. Alan Melnick, Chair, Clark County
Ryan Smith, Vice-Chair, Member at Large
Ben Shumaker, Director, City of Stevenson
Lee Tischer, Director, Wahkiakum County
Ruth Kendall, Director, City of Longview
Dennis Weber, Director, Cowlitz County
Richard Mahar, Director, Skamania County
Kim Harless, Director, City of Vancouver
Sean Swope, Director, Lewis County
Jeanne Hendrickson, Director, Town of Cathlamet

Excused: Vacant, Director, City of Centralia

Also Present: Staff: Uri Papish, Executive Director
Traci Arnold, Office Administrator

Guests: Diane Dick, Citizen
Heidi Cody, Citizen

Call to Order

Dr. Melnick called the meeting to order. A quorum was confirmed to exist.

Board of Directors Minutes

Dr. Melnick asked for consideration of the February 1, 2024 minutes. Mr. Tischer moved and Mr. Smith seconded that the minutes for the February 1, 2024 Board meeting be approved. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

Dr. Melnick asked for approval of the Consent Agenda including voucher numbers 299 through 349 in the amount of \$34,386.38 which have been approved for payment by the Executive Director, December 2023 Financial Statement, January 2024 Financial Statement, December 2023 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$172,554.57 and January 2024 Salaries and Benefits in the amount of \$186,352.59.

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Ms. Kendall moved and Mr. Mahar seconded that the Consent Agenda be approved. Motion passed.

Changes to Agenda

None

Info Items & Public Comment

Dr. Melnick requested public comment. Mr. Papish said Diane Dick had submitted a comment via email which was requested to be part of the minutes.

March 3, 2024

To: Uri Papish, Executive Director
Board of Directors
Southwest Clean Air Agency

Re: Draft Air Discharge Permit (ADP) 24-3624 for ADP Application CO-1057
Pinnacle Renewable Holdings/Drax, Longview, Wood pellet processing facility

Pleased withdraw this permit based on incomplete and insufficient analysis of emissions in the permit. Please withdraw this permit based on misrepresentation and insufficient facts presented by the applicant in the SEPA checklist and premature decision of determination of non-significance by Cowlitz County. Please withdraw this permit based on the potential of the applicant to exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM 2.5 emissions for the Longview area and the lack of adequate and regulatory air monitoring equipment to meet NAAQS standards.

Pinnacle/Drax should be subject to requirements as a Major Stationary Source and PSD as defined in 40 CFR 52.21 (b).

The applicant stated they would convert sawdust to fuel wood pellets. This makes them a “fuel conversion plant” as defined under EPA national guidance and subject to the statute.

Current federal EPA guidance can be found on their national website-
<https://www.epa.gov/nsr/guidance-definition-fuel-conversion-plants>

[Guidance on the Definition of Fuel Conversion Plants \(pdf\)](#) (57.5 KB)

This document is part of the NSR Policy and Guidance Database.

“that generally occurs at other sources that EPA considers as “fuel conversion plants” (e.g., coal gasification, oil shale processing, conversion of municipal waste to fuel gas, processing of sawdust into pellets) under the PSD rules.” This quote is extracted from the referenced guidance document.

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As a major source of Hazardous Air Pollutants, the applicant is subject to a case-by-case Maximum Achievable Control Technology analysis.

According to the Technical Support Document (TSD) the Pinnacle/Drax project has the potential to emit 44.02 tons per year of HAPs. Where's the MACT analysis?

Emissions analysis for vehicles transporting finished product from the site.

As stated in 4.e. and 4.f. of the TSD, raw materials will be hauled in by truck and finished product removed by truck. However, the company's ADP application only referenced raw materials trucked into the site, about 200 trucks per day, and finished pellets removed by conveyor to port docks for marine export. **Is the vehicle emissions analysis complete?**

"4.e. Final Product Storage. The final product will be stored in one pellet storage dome. A cascade chute will be used to transport the pellets to vehicles, which will take them offsite to be sold. Aeration fans will be used to maintain low pellet temperature.

4.f. Haul Roads. All planned haul roads will be paved. Haul roads are used to transport raw materials on site and transport the finished product off site."

More comments on the draft ADP may be forthcoming.

SWCAA includes the SEPA checklist and DNS by the lead agency, Cowlitz County, as part of the record for the air discharge permit (ADP). **The description of the Pinnacle/Drax project in the SEPA checklist does not match the description of the project in the ADP.** The ADP states finished pellets will be removed from the site by vehicles over haul roads. The SEPA checklist and presumably the DNS is predicated on the use of Port of Longview property and dock for marine export. At the time the SEPA checklist and application to SWCAA for an air discharge permit was made, Pinnacle/Drax had no contractual agreement with Port of Longview for lease of property or dock use. To my knowledge as of this date, there is still no contractual agreement. The haul roads which are included as part of the project are owned and maintained by the Port of Longview.

There are other deficiencies in the SEPA checklist not within the scope of SWCAA permitting.

The Longview air shed may have reached its ambient air limit of PM 2.5 emissions with the recent NAAQS lowered from 12 to 9.

In November 2022, Westrock, at its site near Drax, received a modified permit for a new box plant. They modeled criteria air pollutants for comparison to NAAQS which resulted in the maximum modeled concentration of annual PM 2.5 to be 9 and the 24-hour concentration to be 28. Adding the Pinnacle/Drax modeled concentrations of 1.3 and 8.3 to those of Westrock would bring total ambient air concentrations of PM 2.5 above annual and 24-hour NAAQS.

That is assuming Pinnacle/Drax modeling can be believed. The recent modeling for PNWRE in Hoquiam, a wood pellet processing plant similar in size, process, and output to Drax, stated modeled PM 2.5 concentrations of 3.86 and 11.6.

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Making decisions on NAAQS attainment depends on good data. Bad data in, bad data and decisions out. The only regulatory air monitor in the Longview area is a nephelometer and can't be used to determine compliance with NAAQS. You can't regulate what you're not monitoring. <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2302043.pdf>

Table 25. PM_{2.5} 2022 annual design values and pseudo-design values

Design values from FRM and FEM monitoring sites are shaded. Pseudo-design values from nephelometer sites are estimates only and cannot be used to determine compliance with the NAAQS. DVs in brackets are estimated from fewer than three years of available data. In years

with one or more quarters less than 50% complete, annual means are not reported, which may cause DVs in brackets to deviate slightly from incomplete DVs reported in AQS.

Site	AQS ID	Annual Mean 2020	Annual Mean 2021	Annual Mean 2022	Annual Design Value 2022
Aberdeen Division St	530272002	7.16	4.33	4.59	5.4
Anacortes 202 O Avenue	530570011	NA	NA	5.64	[5.6]
Bellevue SE 12 th St	530330031	6.17	2.80	4.92	4.6
Bellingham Pacific St	53073001	5.55	4.03	NA	[4.8]
Bremerton Spruce Ave	530350007	7.64	5.21	6.36	6.4
Cheeka Peak	530090013	4.88	1.77	2.57	3.1
Chehalis Market Blvd	530410004	5.06	4.73	7.86	5.9
Chelan Woodin Ave	530070007	9.70	4.80	7.33	7.3
Clarkston 13th St	530030004	10.84	10.25	9.46	10.2
Colville E 1st St	530650005	14.57	11.41	8.93	11.6
Darrington Fir St	530610020	7.25	5.57	12.17	8.3
Dayton W Main St	530130002	7.30	6.99	5.45	6.6
Ellensburg Ruby St	530370002	9.29	6.28	7.07	7.5
Kennewick Metaline	530050002	8.55	5.77	5.55	6.6
Kent Central & James	530332004	8.57	7.08	9.25	8.3
Lacey College St	530670013	7.23	4.12	5.01	5.5
LaCrosse Hill St	530750005	6.02	6.04	NA	[6.0]
Lake Forest Park	530330024	8.13	5.46	7.89	7.2
Leavenworth Evans St	530070010	7.67	6.90	10.78	8.5
Longview 30th Ave	530150015	7.60	4.16	5.39	5.7
Marysville 7th Ave	530611007	10.57	7.01	9.12	8.9
Mesa-Pepiot Way	530210002	7.47	4.80	5.89	6.4

Furthermore, there is no meteorological station in this area that can give an accurate picture of wind currents. Situated between hills on the Columbia River, Longview has a unique topography with changeable seasonal prevailing winds.

CBSA	Site	AQS ID	CO	NO ₂	O ₃	SO ₂	PM _{2.5} (FRM/FEM)	PM _{2.5} (Non-FRM/FEM)	PM ₁₀	Meteorological	CSN
Bellingham, WA	Custer-Loomis	530730005			x						
Bellingham, WA	Ferndale-Kickerville Road	530730013				x					
Bellingham, WA	Ferndale-Mountain View Rd	530730017				x			x		
Bremerton-Silverdale-Port Orchard, WA	Bremerton-Spruce Ave	530350007				x					
Centralia, WA	Chehalis-Market Blvd	530410004					x				
Ellensburg, WA	Ellensburg-Ruby St	530370002				x	x				
Kennewick-Richland, WA	Kennewick-Metaline	530050002					x	x	x		
Kennewick-Richland, WA	Kennewick-S Clodfelter Rd	530050003			x						
Kennewick-Richland, WA	Mesa-Pepiot Way	530210002					x				4
Kennewick-Richland, WA	Prosser-Highland Dr	530050004					x				
Lewiston, ID-WA	Clarkston-13th St	530030004					x				
Longview, WA	Longview-30th Ave	530150015					x				
Moses Lake, WA	Moses Lake-Balsam St	530251002					x				

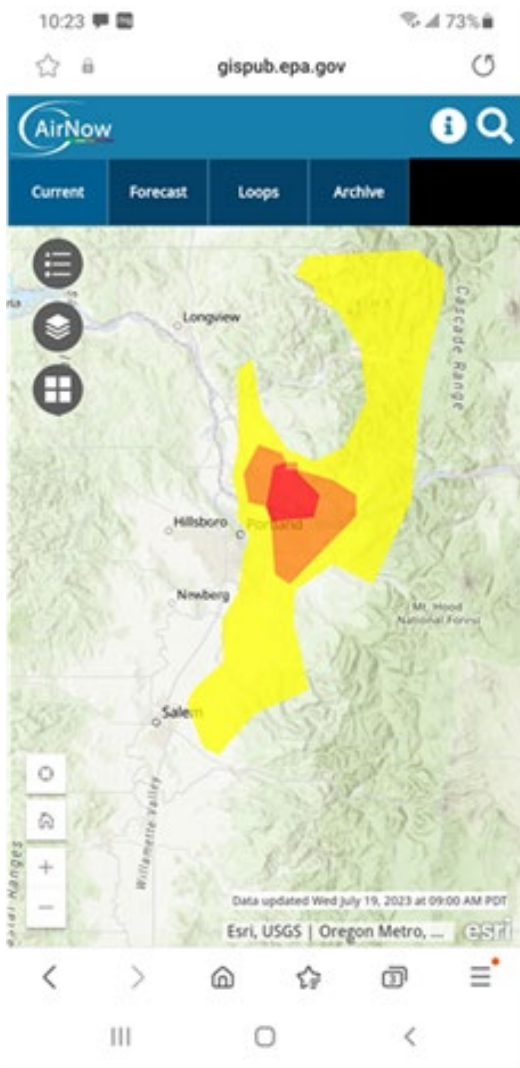
If you want to know why in your activity report the Longview monitor appears to show this area with some of the cleanest air, this is why. The monitor is to the west of some of the heaviest emissions in the area. The prevailing winds blow upriver. Longview's emissions are polluting the air upriver in Kelso, Kalama, Woodland, Vancouver and as far as Portland.

A general overview of the east part of Longview. The visible plumes are from Westrock. The Drax site is on the right edge of the photo.



From July 2023 wood chip fire at Nippon Dynawave. The fire site is about a mile west of the Pinnacle/Drax site. The only monitor in the area is northwest of the fire site.





The Longview area needs monitors regulatory for compliance with NAAQS, and not just for particulate matter. It needs multiple monitors, with monitors in Kelso and at elevation.

Please pull the Pinnacle/Drax air discharge permit. Please address the need for NAAQS compliant air monitors in Longview. Please place a meteorological station in the Longview area.

Thank you,
Diane L. Dick
Longview, WA

Dr. Melnick recognized Ms. Dick. Ms. Dick confirmed the Board members received her email along with a letter from Earthjustice. She is asking for SWCAA to withdraw the permit for Drax. She was hoping the Board had some ability to weigh in and withdraw the permit for further review. She indicated Drax has opposition locally and globally. They have been accused of destroying the forests in the Southwest and she does not want that happening to the forests of the Pacific Northwest. There are concerns about how the processing of wood will affect the air

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shed. The Longview area is already heavy with industry and does not need more pollution. She said the only monitor in the Longview area is a nephelometer which is not a regulatory monitor, so how can SWCAA know if Drax is meeting NAAQS standards. She would like more monitors installed and has been asking for more monitors for a long time. Additionally, her home is at 850 feet elevation which is much higher than the smokestacks of industry. There is no meteorology station, so any modeling being used is most likely worthless. She suggested updating as well as improving the data to make informed decisions about permitting.

Ms. Hendrickson requested to add public comment as a concerned citizen. She said she used to live in Columbia City, Oregon. She said there is a wood pellet facility there, much like what Drax is proposing, which created a constant film of particles on the homes and surrounding area. She would support not approving the permit for Drax.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Dick for taking the time to attend the meeting and provide comment.

There was no additional public comment.

Dr. Melnick opened discussion on the Southwest Clean Air Agency Office Relocation and recognized Mr. Papish. Mr. Papish said SWCAA is considering relocating near the Vancouver Mall which could result in significant cost savings for the agency while providing reduced travel time and better freeway access for conducting fieldwork and responding to air pollution complaints.

Mr. Papish said the second option approved at the February Board meeting is no longer available because the current tenant is not moving out. The agency is back to the first building but a different space in the building. The landlord of the first building offered eight (8) months free rent including a temporary space for 2-3 months while waiting for the current tenant to move out. The permanent space will be approximately \$2,000 less a month than the rent at the current location. Mr. Papish reminded the Board the agency must move at the end of March.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the Executive Director to enter into a lease at Vancouver Square for space 102. Mr. Swope seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Papish said the Board meetings will have to go virtual while the agency is in the temporary space because there is no conference room.

Ms. Harless asked if she could open discussion on the Drax permit. Dr. Melnick said the discussion could be opened. She asked if Mr. Papish could summarize what the Board can or cannot do in regard to permit approval. Mr. Papish said permitting by the agency has always been a function of staff and the Executive Director, the board does not weigh in. The agency views permit issuance as a non-political function, rather the role is to adhere to the rules and the agency has a statutory obligation to issue the permit if it meets the rules. Likewise, the agency has a statutory obligation to deny the permit if it does not meet the rules. Ms. Harless indicated she has been approached by citizens regarding this permit and the possible environmental impacts.

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Mr. Swope said Drax is a great business and will provide several jobs. He said the permit should be issued because Drax does meet the rules.

Ms. Kendall asked if Mr. Papish can discuss the possibility of more monitors as well as a meteorology station in the Longview area. Mr. Papish said he is in favor of adding more monitors in the Longview area and would work with Ms. Dick to get input on locations for the monitors. He clarified he is talking about the SensWA monitors available from WA Department of Ecology. SWCAA only has one regulatory monitor in the entire jurisdiction because they are hundreds of thousands of dollars. Usually, the regulatory monitors are used in areas where there is a non-attainment issue. Based on the current data there is no indication any location within SWCAA's jurisdiction aside from Vancouver has non-attainment issues. The SensWA monitors are 90% accurate and far more cost effective.

Ms. Kendall asked if there are additional ways to get meteorology data. Mr. Papish said meteorological data is coming from the airport in Longview.

Ms. Hendrickson asked if the Drax permit would be reviewed annually. Mr. Papish said the facility would be expected to meet the permit regulations including emission standards. If they don't meet those standards there will be review and possible enforcement action.

Ms. Harless asked what agency would be involved with noise complaints. Mr. Papish said local law enforcement and/or local code enforcement.

Mr. Swope asked if the agency would ever not follow the rules based on public comments. He wanted to know as a member of the Board, if there are concerns and/or board opinion that leans toward public comment would the Board be allowed to not follow the rules. Mr. Papish said the rules are clear and the agency will follow the rules. Mr. Swope said that was his understanding and was glad to hear the rules will be followed but is hearing the agency is willing to add more monitors based on public comment.

Mr. Papish said the agency is interested in increasing the monitoring in the entire jurisdiction, and any additional monitoring in Longview would not be based on any one source. Mr. Swope said he did not want more monitors added as a tool to punish industry. Ms. Hendrickson said her question was about where the monitoring data is coming from in hopes it's not too general, but specific to the area being impacted. Dr. Melnick added that more data is always a good thing. Mr. Smith supports more monitors.

Ms. Harless asked what needed to be done to get more monitors. Mr. Papish said the agency has purchased and deployed several Purple Air Monitors but would like to switch to sensors being developed by WA Department of Ecology. Siting the monitors tends to be the largest issue along with funding. Mr. Weber suggested siting monitors near elementary schools. Mr. Papish agreed, the agency is not talking about facility fence line monitoring but putting monitors where people work, play and live. Mr. Tischer asked when the WA Department of Ecology monitors will be available. Mr. Papish said he would research this and get back to the board.

Ms. Dick, using the chat comment, said (1) the role of the board is to advise the agency that the public should be commenting to the board, (2) the board hires the Executive Director, (3) the role of SWCAA is to protect the residents not support economic

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development, (4) south Kelso has an elementary school near the highway, BNSF and the airport, (5) the MACT analysis is required and if it is not contained in the permit it will be challenged.

Public Hearing

None

Unfinished Business/New Business

None

Executive Session

None

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Papish summarized the information provided in the Executive Director's Report and offered to answer any questions.

Lead in Aviation Fuel ESHB1554 (February 20, 2024) - ESHB1554 reintroduced in the Washington legislature has passed out of its committee of origin. The bill would require WSDOT to take various actions to address lead in aviation fuel, such as an education and outreach campaign, and development of best practices for airport operators to build awareness with surrounding communities related to lead emissions from aviation fuel. DOH would be required to update its blood lead testing guidance for health care providers related to children living near airports using leaded aviation gas. For more information: <https://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1554-S.E.pdf?q=20240229153440>

Senate Bill 6121 Revised (February 13, 2024) - Senate Bill 6121 in the Washington Legislature is concerning biochar production from agricultural and forestry biomass would provide the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) authority to permit and assess permit fees to produce biochar in small units from the burning of clean cellulosic biomass from forestry operations. It would establish permit fees for Ecology for biochar production on from agricultural waste. This bill would address permitting, and fees related to the production of biochar in small units from clean cellulosic biomass from forest and agricultural sources. This bill has been revised after concerns were raised from DOE and local clean air agencies. The bill no longer includes air curtain incinerators which require a Title V air quality permit. The revised bill adds a definition of "flame cap kiln" to the Clean Air Act, which is defined as an outdoor container for the combustion of natural vegetation from silvicultural or agricultural activities. It amends the definition of silvicultural burning to include combustion of natural vegetation from silvicultural activities. It specifies that burning of natural vegetation from agricultural activities in flame cap kilns must obtain a permit and adds combustion of natural vegetation from silvicultural activities in portable flame cap kilns as an

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activity subject to permit fees by DNR. It adds use of portable flame cap kilns as an activity DNR should encourage as an alternative disposal method to open burning. The title of the bill is amended. For more information

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=6121&Year=2023&Initiative=false>

EPA Makes Annual Health-Based PM_{2.5} Standard More Protective, Issues Memo On Initial Area Designations (February 9, 2024) EPA announced the Administrator's final decision to revise the annual primary (health-based) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) to 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) from 12 µg/m³, thus concluding the agency's reconsideration of the 2020 PM NAAQS decision to retain without revision the standards set in 2015. Based on monitoring data for 2020 through 2022 EPA projects that 119 counties nationwide will exceed the 9.0-µg/m³ standard; this number includes 59 counties that are already nonattainment for PM_{2.5} and does not take into account data that may be excluded based on exceptional events demonstrations. The agency further projects that 99 percent of the nation's counties will be in attainment by 2032. In a step toward implementing the revised standard, and to help state, local and tribal air agencies recommend area designations and nonattainment area boundaries, EPA has issued a memorandum, titled "Initial Area Designations for the 2024 Revised Primary Annual Final Particulate National Ambient Air Quality Standard." Among other things, the memo includes information on the schedule and process for initial designations and identifies factors EPA plans to evaluate when making designation and boundary decisions. This final rule will take effect 60 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*. For more info: <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/final-reconsideration-national-ambient-air-quality-standards-particulate-matter-pm>

Bill To Automatically Exempt Monitoring Data Caused by Wildfires Introduced in House of Representatives (February 1, 2024) Congressman John Curtis (R-UT) introduced a bill in the House of Representatives that would amend the Clean Air Act to allow for air quality monitoring data caused by wildfires to be automatically excluded from use in determinations of exceedances or violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). H.R. 7193, the "Wildfire Air Quality Act," would amend Section 319 of the Clean Air Act to add the following provision: "In the event of a catastrophic or beneficial use wildfire determined by the [EPA] Administrator to have a significant impact on air quality, the Administrator shall exclude air quality monitoring data that is directly due to such wildfire from use in determinations by the Administrator with respect to exceedances or violations of the national ambient air quality standards." It would also require EPA to publish a final rule to implement this provision within 30 days of the legislation's enactment. In a press release, Rep. Curtis described the bill as "legislation to prevent states from being punished for wildfire emissions." He stated, "Western States are disproportionately affected by wildfires, skewing data that comes from air quality monitors and leading to undo penalties from the federal government... Utah experiences this firsthand and this legislation will remove the bureaucratic red tape to ensure we can focus on recovery and rebuilding, not EPA waivers and legal jargon." For further information: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7193?overview=closed> and https://curtis.house.gov/uploadedfiles/curtut_021_xml.pdf

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Board Policy Discussion Issues

None.

Issues for Next Meeting

A. Public Hearing.

1. As Necessary.

B. New Business/Unfinished Business.

1. ED Evaluation (April)
2. Staff COLA Decision (April)
3. SWCAA Budget (May)

C. Meeting Date and Location.

1. April 4, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. Southwest Clean Air Agency, 11815 NE 99th Street, Vancouver, Washington.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on April 4, 2024 at 3:00 p.m., Southwest Clean Air Agency, Vancouver, Washington.

Board Meeting Attendance:

JURISDICTION	J 2024	F 2024	M 2024	A 2023	M 2023	J 2023	J 2023	A 2023	S 2023	O 2023	N 2023	D 2023
Clark County	+	+	+	+	0	+	C	0	+	+	+	C
Cowlitz County	+	+	A	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	A	C
Lewis County	0	+	+	+	+	0	C	+	0	+	+	C
Skamania County	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Wahkiakum County	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Cathlamet	+	0	A	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Centralia	+	0	0	0	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Longview	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C
Stevenson	A	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	0	+	C
Vancouver	+	+	+	+	+	0	C	0	+	+	+	C
Member-At-Large	+	+	+	+	+	+	C	+	+	+	+	C

+ = regular member present; 0 = unrepresented; A = alternate present; C = cancelled meeting

Dr. Melnick adjourned the meeting without objection at 3:59 p.m.

DocuSigned by:

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 Chair

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 Executive Director