

OLYMPIA, Wash.--( [BUSINESS WIRE](#) )--In a unanimous decision announced today, the Washington State Supreme Court backed Governor Christine Gregoire's March 2012 approval of the Whistling Ridge Wind Energy Project. The Court action denies a legal challenge to erecting 35 wind turbines on private industrial timberland in eastern Skamania County, Washington.

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Jason Spadaro, SDS Lumber Company and Whistling Ridge Energy LLC's President, thanked the renewable energy project's many supporters and restated his company's commitment to the project. "The Siting Council, the Governor and now the Washington Supreme Court have all recognized that this project is outside of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, and that all impacts have been appropriately mitigated," said Spadaro. "We look forward to finally proceeding with the business of securing markets for our energy and creating local jobs and tax base."

The Supreme Court dismissed assertions made by the Portland-based Friends of the Columbia Gorge, and its ally Save Our Scenic Area. The Court found that Whistling Ridge's permit application was not flawed as the petitioners claimed, and that the responsible state agency, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), considered all of the wind farm's potential impacts.

"Any minor deficiencies in the application itself are to be expected and do not warrant reversal," the Court wrote. "Invalidation of the completed review and recommendation would also defeat the purpose of the extended hearings and [EFSEC's] ongoing oversight of the project."

"Today's decision is an unequivocal affirmation for following a criteria-based, objective process in reviewing energy projects," said Timothy McMahan, Stoel Rives partner and lead attorney for Whistling Ridge LLC. "The Court confirmed it will defer to EFSEC and the Governor when they consider the entire record and apply the applicable regulatory standards."

## Washington State Supreme Court Decision Confirms Approval of Whistling Ridge Wind Farm

Written by Australian Business

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Whistling Ridge LLC first proposed the \$150 million wind farm in Spring of 2008 securing the support of Skamania County, Skamania PUD, Klickitat County's Economic Development Authority, the Association of Washington Business, Washington Department of Commerce, along with local citizens, several environmental groups and local tribal leaders. The project underwent the most comprehensive review of any wind farm in the Northwest. EFSEC held eight days of formal court-like hearings complete with expert testimony and cross examination along with hearings where state officials took public comment from supporters and opponents.

"EFSEC reached the right conclusion, as did Governor Gregoire. Now the Supreme Court has confirmed their actions. We always knew," Spadaro added, "that we were making a wise investment and doing the right thing for our community and for the environment. I'm looking forward to the next step in this process."