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March 29, 2021

Ms. Kathleen Drew  
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council  
Horse Heaven Wind Farm  
621 Woodland Square Loop SE  
P.O. Box 43172  
Olympia, WA 98504-3172

**RE: Horse Heaven Wind Project**

Dear Ms. Drew:

The Visit Tri-Cities Board of Directors is in opposition to the proposed Horse Heaven Wind Farm project in Benton County. Our concern is this installation will have significant adverse impacts on our tourism economy, which has been devastated by the pandemic. We respectfully ask that you reject Scout Clean Energy's EFSEC application.

COVID-19 has had devastating impacts to the Tri-Cities tourism economy as witnessed by the 55% decline in lodging tax revenues we experienced in 2020, loss of businesses and loss of permanent jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector. As Washingtonians have been diligent in working to mitigate this public health crisis and its associated financial and emotional impacts, it is expected to take several years for our tourism economy to return to 2019 performance. On behalf of our stakeholders and our community, we have committed considerable energy and resources to foster economic recovery. This includes working with the Governor's office, local agencies and our community to ensure public health and to safely bring back our tourism economy, which enhances quality of life for all Tri-Citians.

Pre-pandemic, tourism provided half-a-billion dollars in economic impact to the Tri-Cities and supported over 5,600 permanent jobs in our community. The pandemic has crippled our industry; we have had a number of tourism and hospitality businesses close, a significant loss of jobs, and hotels have experienced record low occupancy rates, with some properties being shuttered.

A competitive advantage of our region is our wine industry. Visitors to the Tri-Cities are literally in the Heart of Washington Wine Country; the vast majority of our State's wine grapes are grown here. Our Red Mountain American Viticulture Area is home to rolling vineyards and estate wineries with incredible views of the Horse Heaven Hills. The beauty of our region and its rugged desert hills are a significant tourism draw. This encapsulates our brand promise of outdoor recreation and wide-open spaces. From wine lovers, to bird watchers to visitors whose interest lies in the exploration and understanding of the Great Missoula Floods, the Horse Heaven Hills provide a wealth of leisure opportunities, which drive significant quality-of-life impacts.



The proposed Horse Heaven Wind Farm is expected to have adverse impacts on our tourism economy for years to come. The towering wind turbines would rob our region of its scenic beauty, have detrimental impact on wildlife, while creating a perception of a windy destination translating into a loss of visitation. Relatedly, a downturn in our tourism economy translates to loss of permanent jobs, businesses and the quality-of-life impacts our activities fund.

Again, we respectfully ask that you reject Scout Clean Energy's EFSEC application for the Horse Heaven Wind Farm.

Sincerely,



Rob Roxburgh  
Chair, Visit Tri-Cities Board of Directors



Michael Novakovich  
President & CEO, Visit Tri-Cities