

Chair Decker, Commissioner Tawney, and Commissioner Perkins: The Washington County Chamber of Commerce strongly supports NW Natural's line extension proposal, which we believe is essential for fostering economic development and enhancing community well-being in our region, while focusing on decarbonizing the energy system and protecting resiliency for residents. Washington County is a vibrant community with growing residential and business needs. NW Natural's innovative proposal to enable the building community to affordably deliver housing with resilient energy systems will significantly benefit our local businesses by providing residents with reliable, cost-effective energy options that are crucial for daily operations and long-term planning. This proposal is not merely an enhancement of resiliency; it is an investment in the economic foundation of our county. Moreover, this project aligns with our commitment to sustainability and responsible resource management. Natural gas plays a pivotal role in our transitional energy strategies, helping us balance economic growth with environmental stewardship, while ensuring that the energy that residents depend on is available, even during extreme weather events. By supporting this proposal, we are endorsing a vision that promotes growth, reliability, and sustainability—a vision that is integral to the future of Washington County. Therefore, I urge the Commission to consider the substantial positive impacts this project will have on our community and to approve NW Natural's line extension proposal. Thank you for your attention and consideration. Deanna Palm President/CEO