

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES  
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
COMMISSIONERS' AUDITORIUM  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**MONDAY**

**3:30 P.M.**

**JANUARY 5, 2009**

Board members present: Chairman Mark McClain; Vice-Chairman Alan Crankovich; Commissioner Paul Jewell.

Others present: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Neil Caulkins, Deputy Prosecutor and 7 members of the public.

**SPECIAL MEETING WIND ENERGY BASED ROYALTY PROGRAM COMMISSIONERS**

At approximately 3:30 p.m. Chairman McClain opened a special meeting to discuss a wind energy based royalty program.

Commissioner Paul Jewell explained that a wind energy based royalty program was a campaign issue for himself while running for County Commissioner. He said although he did not have any specific proposal to bring forward at the current time, he wanted to hold a special meeting with the Board to see if they thought it was worth looking into and if it's even feasible. He explained he had done some research and a brief discussion with legal staff of the possibility of this type of program. He indicated that it's not a new concept and there are some programs that have been up and running all over the country including Alaska, New Mexico, Alabama and Wyoming. He felt wind energy was a product and therefore could be charged a royalty and the County could use the earnings on whatever they decided on. He said although there is an end of life on most projects, he thought this type of program would be permanent in our area. He believes the impacts are felt by all residents of Kittitas County and they should be compensated. He noted that our county has everything available for wind farms including valuable wind source, high transmission lines and open space.

Commissioner Crankovich explained that the other royalty programs are based on land ownership for mineral extraction and wind does not have ownership. He questioned how they could charge a royalty on something that is beyond anyone's control (air movement versus drilling mineral rights). Commissioner Jewell explained it was more of an issue relating to impacts and payment for what the residents of Kittitas County are giving up such as a permanent change in the quality of life. He felt the county had a unique opportunity and it was something worth looking into and offered

to be responsible for doing the leg work. He said that hydroelectric dams may be similar to the type of program.

Deputy Prosecutor Neil Caulkins, explained Interstate Commerce how he saw no way of instituting a royalty concept based on kilowatt per hour generated. He indicated that Alaska's program is based on mining rights and extraction. He also noted that dams are federally licensed and are regulated by them and the states have different taxing authorities, noting counties do not have the authority over them. He explained how the impacts to county residents should be addressed in the SEPA and Development Agreements for wind farm proposals.

Commissioner Crankovich moved to adjourn at 4:00 p.m.  
Commissioner Jewell seconded. Motion carried 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

**CLERK OF THE BOARD**

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

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**Julie Kjorsvik**

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**Mark McClain, Chairman**