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March 17, 2025

Gary Huhta, General Manager
Public Utility District No. 1 of Cowlitz County
PO Box 3007
Longview, WA 98632

RE: Cowlitz PUD I-5 Corridor Electric Distribution Capacity Upgrades

Dear Mr. Huhta,

On behalf of the Cowlitz Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG), I am pleased to support Cowlitz Public Utility District's I-5 Corridor Electric Distribution Capacity Upgrades request for FY 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending.

The CWCOG serves as the federally designated Economic Development District for the two-county district including Cowlitz and Wahkiakum and develops a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region. Expansion of electric distribution and transmission capacity is foundational to the region's economic growth, and Cowlitz PUD's proposed project will support future economic and residential development while enhancing grid resiliency and supporting deployment of publicly available electric vehicle charging.

As the I-5 corridor continues to be developed, the proposed upgrades will allow northern Cowlitz County to benefit from job creation, new housing opportunities and an increasing tax base. The continued electrification of the transportation sector will also require new grid investments to accommodate increasing electrical loads and commercial service centers along highway interchanges.

Thank you for your work on this initiative and supporting Cowlitz County's future economic vitality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'William A. Fashing', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

William A. Fashing
Executive Director