

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/26/2026 7:46:28 PM

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Comments: I am in favor of exploring geothermal as an option for baseline electricity generation in our region. The grid in Whatcom county currently receives much of its power from fossil fuels, and with increased electrification of transportation the demand will increase. Geothermal offers a way to get energy without releasing greenhouse gases. Further, the area geology appears promising from preliminary studies.

I am also an avid outdoor recreationist who regularly travels on the Mt Baker/Kulshan volcano and surrounding areas to ski, hike, and climb. A potential benefit of geothermal would be investment in the roads and access points that need constant upkeep. Access to the mountains has important economic impacts for surrounding communities and mountain guides who work in the landscape.

A geothermal plant can be built in a way that minimizes impacts on recreationists, wildlife, and the wilderness experience. The tribes that have helped fund the initial studies of the area have been stewards of the land since time immemorial, and I do not doubt they also want to preserve the land for the future. Geothermal could provide an important energy source that prevents the burning and release of significant greenhouse gases. Elevated CO₂ and other gases are already impacting the landscape through melting glacier ice, heavy rain events and floods, and heatwaves that kill trees.

It is important to fully explore the geothermal option.