

MINUTES

Oregon Sustainability Board



OFFICE OF
SUSTANABILITY
Oregon Department of
Administrative Services

Meeting Date: December 5, 2025

Time: 10:30 am to 4:00 pm

Location: Zoom and DAS Executive Building

Attendees: OSB: Rex Burkholder (Chair), Webly Bowles, Serena Dietrich, Josh Proudfoot, Elin Shepard, Tom Kelly, Chris Enlow, Tanea Browning
DAS: Steven Markham, Jeni Hall, Zechariah Heck
Secretary of State's Office: Secretary Read, Ricardo Lujan Valerio

Guest Presenters:

Welcome, Introductions and Board Business 10:30-11:00 am

The Oregon Sustainability Board convened for its quarterly meeting to discuss strategic priorities, agency updates, and sustainability initiatives across state departments. The meeting began with a warm welcome to Zechariah Heck, who will assume the role of full-time Statewide Sustainability Officer starting January 1, 2026. Previously serving part-time through a rotational assignment with ODOT, Zechariah expressed enthusiasm for deepening agency collaboration and resolving IT and material distribution challenges.

Chris Enlow, newly confirmed board member from Portland, introduced himself and shared his background in corporate sustainability, global supply chains, PFAS elimination, and nonprofit work. He emphasized his interest in forward-thinking sustainability strategies and community engagement. The board also welcomed Secretary of State Tobias Read, who will serve as the incoming Chair. Secretary Read reflected on his legislative role in making the Sustainability Board permanent in 2007 and expressed his commitment to focusing on state operations and listening to agency needs. Ricardo Lujan Malario, Deputy Chief of Staff, was introduced as the liaison for the Secretary's office.

Agency Sustainability Plan Presentations 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Travel Oregon

Sarah Watson, Chief of Staff at Travel Oregon, presented the agency's sustainability strategy and 10-year vision. She began by outlining the agency's funding structure, which is primarily supported by a 1.5% statewide lodging tax. This tax allocates 65% to statewide tourism programs, 20% to regional cooperative tourism, and 10% to competitive grants. Sarah noted that nearly \$26 million will be reinvested into Oregon communities during the 2025–2027 biennium.

Travel Oregon's strategic vision, adopted in 2022, focuses on balancing economic vitality, environmental health, and community well-being. The agency's sustainability framework is built around three lenses: prosperity, racial equity, and regenerative tourism. These align with the Oregon Sustainability Act's principles of environmental, economic, and community sustainability.

Sarah highlighted the agency's use of KPIs to measure progress, with 16 of 18 KPIs baselined and 13 having established goals. Monitoring tools include industry partner surveys, resident sentiment surveys, economic impact reports, and visitor profiles. Key initiatives include climate planning, dark sky sanctuary designation, transit solutions, and geo-targeted messaging to promote responsible recreation.

The board praised Travel Oregon's transparency and data-driven approach. Members raised questions about the definition of regenerative tourism, the role of EV infrastructure in remote destinations, and the potential for implementing destination restoration fees. Sarah acknowledged the evolving nature of regenerative tourism and committed to refining the agency's definition.

Oregon Department of Energy

Linda Bures and Danae Hammitt presented ODOE's operational sustainability efforts. The agency has adopted a remote-first workplace model, which has significantly reduced commuting-related emissions and led to a 30% reduction in building footprint. Staff now plan on-site time intentionally, and the agency has retired high-energy equipment in favor of more efficient alternatives.

ODOE has modernized its fleet by retiring older vehicles and adding plug-in hybrid models. Plans are in place to transition remaining gas-powered vehicles to fully electric options. The agency's sustainability plan focuses on Scope 3 emissions, including employee commuting, procurement impacts, and remote work energy use.

The agency's efforts align with the Oregon State Energy Strategy and Executive Order 25-29, which emphasize clean transportation, efficient buildings, and digital modernization. ODOE's community outreach includes a navigator who has held meetings in every county, focusing on underserved and energy-burdened communities.

Board members discussed broader energy infrastructure challenges, including the impact of data centers on water supply and energy demand. Suggestions included leveraging weatherization programs and good neighbor agreements to offset energy use. ODOE committed to further exploring these ideas and coordinating with federal partners.

Department of Land Conservation and Development

Josh Hardage, Assistant Director and COO of DLCD, presented the agency's operational and programmatic sustainability efforts. DLCD celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2023, marking five decades since the passage of Senate Bill 100. The agency has grown from 70 to 115 staff, largely due to new housing legislation and the creation of the Housing Accountability and Production Office.

DLCD has prioritized digitization, including scanning historical land use maps and transitioning servers to DAS. A major building renovation is planned for 2026, which will include energy-efficient upgrades. The agency's GIS team has expanded to provide mapping tools to cities and counties for better land use planning.

DLCD's strategic plan includes five focus areas: equitable planning and engagement, robust operations, community resilience, climate-friendly communities, and renewable energy coordination. The agency has supported local governments with grants for climate-friendly area designations, parking reform, and walkable design standards.

Board members expressed interest in DLCD's role in energy transmission and the challenges of balancing land conservation with infrastructure development. Josh noted that technical assistance and financial resources are key barriers for local governments and emphasized the importance of inter-agency collaboration.

Lunch Break
12:30 pm – 1:00 pm

Board Workplan Session
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

The board reviewed its strategic priorities for 2026, based on input from a recent retreat and member survey. The top three priorities identified were fleet decarbonization, building decarbonization (including implementation of HB 3409), and sustainable procurement. These areas were selected for their potential impact and feasibility within the board’s scope.

Equity was emphasized as a cross-cutting theme to be embedded in all initiatives. Members discussed the need for improved reporting templates, inter-agency collaboration, and potential legislative engagement. The idea of hosting an annual Sustainability Summit was proposed to foster broader dialogue and coordination.

Subcommittees were proposed to focus on specific areas, including liaison work with the Oregon Climate Action Commission, support for building standards, and coordination on equity and outreach. Members expressed interest in expanding the board’s role in shaping agency sustainability plans and influencing policy.

The board discussed recent legislation and its implications for sustainability. House Bill 3409 mandates DAS to develop sustainable building standards and includes penalties for non-compliance. The board expressed interest in supporting implementation and monitoring progress.

A proposal for a “1% for Wildlife” lodging tax was discussed, which could generate \$30 million annually for conservation efforts. While the proposal has strong support from environmental groups, it faces opposition from the Restaurant Association. The board considered its role in supporting such initiatives, while acknowledging the need for discretion and strategic engagement.

Historically, the board has focused on executive orders rather than direct legislative advocacy. Members discussed the potential risks and benefits of expanding their role in legislative engagement, including the possibility of proposing legislation or supporting agency policy option packages.

Equity was identified as a foundational element of the board’s work. Agencies were encouraged to report on the demographics of their outreach and the effectiveness of their engagement strategies. Travel Oregon’s accessibility initiatives and ODOE’s community navigator program were highlighted as examples of successful equity integration.

Board members emphasized the importance of including historically underserved communities in sustainability planning and decision-making. Suggestions included translating materials, partnering with tribal governments, and using inclusive storytelling to amplify diverse voices.

The board discussed strategies for improving communication and outreach. A proposal was made to host an annual Sustainability Summit to bring together agencies, stakeholders, and the public. The summit would serve as a platform for sharing best practices, building partnerships, and elevating sustainability efforts across the state.

Members also suggested leveraging DAS newsletters and other internal communications channels to highlight agency successes. Emphasis was placed on storytelling as a tool for engagement and education, with a focus on making sustainability relatable and actionable.

Public Comment
3:00 – 3:10 pm

No Public Comment

Executive Building Tour/ Art Installation Tour and Closing
3:10 pm – 4:00 pm

The meeting concluded with a tour of the renovated DAS building, led by Karen Green (DAS Project Manager), showcasing energy-efficient upgrades and workspace improvements. Informal discussions followed regarding office locations, staff assignments, and future meeting logistics.

Board members expressed appreciation for the depth of the presentations and the collaborative spirit of the meeting. Consensus was reached on the strategic priorities for 2026, and members committed to continued engagement and support for sustainability initiatives across Oregon.