

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Submitted to the  
**ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE COUNCIL**

by the  
**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Oregon Department of Energy is pleased to submit its 2025 Environmental Justice Report to the Environmental Justice Council. This year has presented funding challenges that ODOE is working to overcome while still serving environmental justice communities across the state. ODOE is embarking on a new strategic planning process, has continued to prioritize building relationships with communities and seek meaningful engagement, and is updating tools that may be helpful to Tribes, organizations, government entities, and members of the public to be able to participate in processes.

In January 2025, the new federal administration rescinded the Justice40 Initiative. Even without this federal guidance, ODOE has stayed committed to our values and obligations to serve disadvantaged communities across the state. The removal of many federal mapping tools and uncertainty of federal funds have presented some complex problems that we have worked to overcome. Other consequences of federal changes have been more challenging to address. For instance, ODOE received a letter on August 7, 2025 from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stating that the EPA is canceling all [Solar for All](#) program funding. Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield joined 23 other Solar for All awardees in a lawsuit against the EPA for illegally ending the \$7 billion program. It is unclear what the outcome of this effort will be.

ODOE is developing a new 2026 - 2029 [strategic plan](#). As part of this effort, ODOE has conducted external and internal engagement to better understand how the agency is perceived, what ODOE's greatest value and contribution could be, and what the public expects of ODOE while we uphold our mission, vision, and values. We look forward to sharing the new strategic plan in 2026.

Through councils, committees, projects, and programs like the [Community Navigator Program](#), ODOE continues to build relationships and paths to meaningful engagement across the agency. This effort was evident throughout the development of the [Oregon Energy Strategy](#) as the team hosted three public [informational webinars](#), three public listening sessions, one in-person public report out, seven [advisory group](#) meetings, and seventeen [working group](#) meetings. There was a total of five working groups, with 149 members participating who represented specific areas of technical and lived expertise. The environmental justice and equity working group had 27 members from across the state.

While there has been a loss of some federal data and mapping tools, ODOE has updated the [Oregon Renewable Energy Siting Assessment](#) tool, which was initially developed to be used in the siting process, but is finding more opportunities to be an even greater resource broadly. Users may select from many layers that allow them to explore an area of interest with options like energy burden, land type, soil class, threatened and endangered species, and much more. The underlying spatial data used in ORESA was determined through community work groups to identify essential intersecting spatial information of land-use, economic, and environmental concerns.

As the federal government goes from being the wind at our back to a headwind in the state's efforts to meet its greenhouse gas reduction goals, ODOE recognizes the need for continued support from the Environmental Justice Council to ensure the prioritization of environmental justice communities through funding, program development, and implementation. ODOE continues to look forward to the environmental justice mapping tool and will continue to support its development.

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## AGENCY INTRODUCTION



### About the Oregon Department of Energy

#### Our Mission

The Oregon Department of Energy helps Oregonians make informed decisions and maintain a resilient and affordable energy system. We advance solutions to shape an equitable clean energy transition, protect the environment and public health, and responsibly balance energy needs and impacts for current and future generations.

#### Our Values

- We listen and aspire to be inclusive and equitable in our work.
- We are ethical and conduct our work with integrity.
- We are accountable and fiscally responsible in our work and the decisions of our agency.
- We are innovative and focus on problem-solving to address the challenges and opportunities in Oregon's energy sector.
- We conduct our agency practices and processes in a transparent and fair way.

#### The Oregon Department of Energy achieves its mission by providing:

- A Central Repository of Energy Data, Information, and Analysis
- A Venue for Problem-Solving Oregon's Energy Challenges
- Energy Education and Technical Assistance
- Regulation and Oversight
- Energy Programs and Activities

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- [Energy Facility Siting Council](#)
- [Oregon Climate Action Commission](#)
- [Oregon Hanford Clean-Up Board](#)
- [Energy Advisory Work Group](#)



## AGENCY BUDGET AND REVENUE SOURCES

The Oregon Department of Energy's [Legislatively Adopted Budget](#) for the 2025-2027 biennium is \$226 million. This includes funding for ODOE programs across the agency and about 128 staff (FTE). For 2025-2027, there was a decrease in General Fund for several energy incentive and rebate programs.

This budget supports five agency divisions (described in more detail below):

- Administrative Services
- Planning & Innovation
- Energy Development Services
- Energy Facility Siting
- Nuclear Safety and Energy Security

Learn more about [how we're funded](#) and see our [budget history](#) for more information.

In addition to ODOE's state funding, the agency received additional funding from the federal government through the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Specific federal grants come with additional guidance from the federal government specifying prioritization in spending, program design, or other grant requirements. For example, when ODOE signed grant agreements for many of the federal funds it received, they included Executive Order 14008, Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, issued by President Joe Biden. At the time, the federal Office of Energy Justice and Equity existed and described Section 223 of EO 14008 as establishing "...the Justice40 Initiative, which directed 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments – including investments in clean energy and energy efficiency; clean transit; affordable and sustainable housing; training and workforce development; the remediation and reduction of legacy pollution; and the development of clean water infrastructure – to flow to disadvantaged communities."

On January 20, 2025, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and all data were removed from USDOE's website and are no longer accessible. While language associated with the Justice40 Initiative has been removed, ODOE is still committed to serving disadvantaged and environmental justice communities in accordance with Oregon's policies and federal and state laws.

ODOE maintains an online dashboard for the federally funded grants that are coming through ODOE: <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/energy-oregon/Documents/ODOE-Fed-Grant-Timeline.pdf> and the grants that are marked as "awarded" have grant agreements associated with them.

To date, ODOE has been awarded over \$280 million in IIJA and IRA grants or subgrants to administer energy programs. However, \$86.6 million for Solar for All is currently inaccessible. On August 7, 2025, the Oregon Department of Energy received a letter from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stating that the EPA is canceling all Solar for All program funding. On September 5, 2025, the Oregon Department of Energy sent a letter to the U.S. EPA regarding the wrongful termination of the grant. On October 16, 2025, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield announced Oregon is joining 23 other Solar for All awardees in a lawsuit against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for illegally ending the \$7 billion program. The [Solar for All](#) program was developed to serve communities that have been systematically excluded from access to resources and are experiencing financial hardship or constraint and qualify as low-income households.

ODOE provides updates on our federal grants on our website: [State of Oregon: Energy in Oregon - Recent Federal Investments in Energy and Climate](#). Further details on available federal grants related to

clean energy and climate change can be found on the [IIJA & IRA Opportunity Tracker](#) that ODOE staff updates weekly.

More information about the Oregon Department of Energy’s budget is [available online](#).

## AGENCY DIVISIONS AND PROGRAMS

### Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Division consists of the Director’s Office and Central Services.

Central Services provides core support functions such as budget development, cash flow monitoring, contract development, grants management, financial services, purchasing, human resources, and facilities management. The Director’s Office provides operational and policy leadership and direction for the department. The Director’s Office functions include internal audit, communications, strategic engagement, and government relations. The Director’s Office established the Strategic Engagement Team, which has two positions who explicitly work with environmental justice communities, the Strategic Engagement Analyst (previously known as the Community Equity and Inclusion Analyst) and the [Community Navigator](#). Additionally, this team includes the Tribal Liaison and is responsible for [annual reports](#) to the nine federally recognized Tribes and the Legislative Commission on Indian Services.



### Energy Planning and Innovation

The Energy Planning and Innovation Division provides information, analysis, technical assistance, and project management to inform policies and develop programs to achieve cost effective energy efficiency, promote an equitable energy transition, expand the use of renewable and alternative energy resources, promote sustainable transportation options, support more resilient energy infrastructure, and combat climate change.

The P&I division is made up of staff who are often tasked with analyzing or meeting federal and state energy requirements while seeking opportunities to serve environmental justice communities. They consider how staff and the programs can best serve Oregonians who are most affected by energy policies and decisions.

The team conducts research, analyzes data, and writes comprehensive policy analysis and recommendations, which can be seen through various [legislatively directed studies](#) – some of which specify outreach or engagement approaches such as forming advisory committees.

When the most vulnerable people and areas of the state **are best served**, all Oregonians will benefit.

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Some statutes provide specific legislative direction or requirements to engage with environmental justice communities in assigning studies, reports, or projects to the agency, which can sometimes come with additional funding or resources to that work. However, when there is not a specific statutory requirement, staff still work to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement in processes.

The division includes four broad areas of work: Energy Efficiency and Conservation, Building Codes and Standards, Energy Technology and Policy, and Climate Action.

- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation** supports the advancement of energy efficiency standards and codes and also provides analysis and technical assistance to improve energy efficiency in the public, residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors.
- **Building Codes and Standards** addresses energy use and emissions from buildings to work toward reduced greenhouse gas emissions and improved heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems in buildings to use less energy and improve indoor air quality and comfort. The team also supports local workforce and jobs to improve building performance through investment in energy efficiency measures and technology and works to implement cost-effective energy measures to reduce operating costs for building owners and tenants.
- **Energy Technology and Policy** maintains expertise on energy technologies and policies and serves as a source of impartial and objective information for Oregonians on energy production, distribution, utilization, and conservation. The team assesses Oregon’s progress on achieving state energy goals while maintaining a reliable, resilient, and affordable energy system and minimizing negative outcomes on Oregon’s environment, economy, and way of life.
- **The Planning and Innovation Division also works on climate change**, with two core focus areas: climate action and natural climate solutions. Climate action involves actions and activities to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and other human activities. Natural climate solutions involve actions to increase net biological carbon sequestration and storage on Oregon’s natural and working lands. The climate team also coordinates closely with and supports the [Oregon Climate Action Commission](#) (formerly Oregon Global Warming Commission). The team additionally leads the [Transformational Integrated Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction](#) (TIGHGER) Project, which assesses Oregon’s projected progress toward meeting its greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

The [Natural Climate Solutions](#) staff has been working with consultants to ensure meaningful engagement in the development of a new land-based net carbon inventory and a workforce and training program needs study. The outreach and engagement included:

- Consultation and coordination with nine federally recognized Tribes: 5 Government-to-Government letters, 5 meetings
- Advisory committee meetings: 16 hours (8 meetings)
- Interagency working group: 8 hours (3 meetings)
- 1:1 agency meetings: At least one meeting with each agency and multiple follow-ups with ODF and DEQ
- Inventory technical expert contacts: emails/meetings with 18 academic researchers and meetings with 2 non-profits



- Monthly emails: 10 partner updates and 11 agency updates

## Energy Development Services Incentive Programs

The Energy Development Services Division administers energy incentive programs for households, businesses, and the public sector to save energy and improve efficiency, support clean energy, and increase energy resilience for Oregonians. These programs are both legislatively directed and state funded, as well as federally funded through grants from the U.S. Department of Energy and other federal agencies. While P&I staff have led efforts to engage and hear feedback on program design before submitting federal grant applications, the EDS team plans, implements, and administers the federally funded programs once grants are awarded.

The Oregon Department of Energy administers five state-funded incentive programs: the [Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program](#), [Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive](#), [Community Renewable Energy Grant Program](#), [Community Heat Pump Deployment Program](#), and [Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program](#). The Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive program ended June 30, 2025. While still statutorily authorized, none of the other programs received additional funding for the 2025-2027 biennium. The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program will announce the latest round of awardees in early 2026 and will open at least one additional round in the future. Other programs are mostly on hold or mostly have administrative work. The Community Heat Pump Deployment Program remains open on the North and South Coast, and for the Burns Paiute Tribe and its members. The Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program is open for Tribes and members of those Tribes who did not pursue a grant through the Community Heat Pump Deployment Program. Details on the allocated, utilized, and remaining funds for each Tribe in the Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program can be found on the [program website](#).



Programs funded by federal grants through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act originally were directed, via the Justice40 Initiative, to ensure 40 percent of benefits flow to “disadvantaged communities” as defined by the now-defunct Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST). ODOE must also follow any federal guidance or legislative direction that further outlines funding allocation requirements. It is ODOE’s intention to meet and work to surpass federal requirements where possible to meet the needs of environmental justice communities in Oregon.

In June 2023, the U.S. DOE awarded Oregon \$19,907,304 for a [Grid Resilience Grant Program](#). In July 2024, the U.S. DOE modified the award, adding \$10,991,729 for a total award of \$30,899,033 to Oregon via the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grants program, which is supported by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). In the competitive review process, ODOE is committed to awarding these funds to a diverse set of projects, with priority given to efforts that generate the greatest community benefit providing clean, affordable, and reliable energy.

In 2025, the U.S. Department of Energy waived all reporting requirements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion; community benefit plans; and Justice40 requirements, conditions, or principles as indicated in the Federal Assistance Reporting Checklist and otherwise described in the award

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documents. This waiver applies to quarterly, annual, and final reporting as well as continuation applications. For the Grid Resilience Grant Program, further USDOE guidance made the following sections of the federal annual project report optional: Job Creation and Training; Workforce Demographics; Community Engagement Activities; and Community Engagement Events. While the Grid Resilience Grant Program did not require any of these activities, it allowed them to be used for prioritization of project selection.

Similarly, the Home Energy Rebate Programs—two federally funded programs that will provide financial incentives to single-family and multifamily households for eligible high-efficiency home improvements, appliances, and equipment—have been subject to federal uncertainty and changes. The U.S. Department of Energy has rescinded all requirements related to diversity, equity, inclusion and no longer requires states to comply with the Justice40 Initiative or to develop and adhere to a program-specific Community Benefits Plan or report on related activities. While Section 50121 of the Inflation Reduction Act specifically calls for incentive payments to contractors installing retrofits in a disadvantaged community for the HOMES program, the U.S. Department of Energy has indicated that the agency intends to make additional changes to the program requirements, but no additional information has been released, so it is unclear what these changes might look like. In the meantime, ODOE staff have been working to adapt, utilizing a new mapping tool developed by [the Northwest Clean Energy Atlas](#) to replace CEJST and stimulate rebate deployment in energy burdened communities.

Throughout ODOE’s state and federally funded incentive programs, staff develop outreach and engagement plans before launching a program by hosting webinars and sending written communication. As there have been changes to federal as well as state incentive programs, ODOE staff have worked to provide updates to community partners and external organizations, so they are aware and have an opportunity to ask questions.

The state funded programs have had high participation over years and have yielded benefits in the state. Due to budget constraints, these programs did not receive additional funding for the 2025-2027 biennium.

- [Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program](#) ([2024-OSSRP-Legislative-Report.pdf \(oregon.gov\)](#)) was established by ODOE at the direction of HB 2618 in 2019. The legislation directed the department to develop a program to provide rebates for the purchase, construction, or installation of solar electric systems and paired solar and storage systems. While “environmental justice” communities were not referenced, HB 2618 requires that 25 percent of rebates be reserved for low- or moderate-income residential customers and low-income service providers. In the calendar year 2023, the program reserved or rebated 2,705 projects, representing over \$10.4 million in funds. \$5.1 million, or 49 percent of the committed funding, was for projects owned by low- and medium-income owners or low-income service providers. This program includes follow-up engagement to better understand how to serve environmental justice communities and potential gaps by sending an anonymous survey to participants to learn more about demographic data, including race or ethnicity and if someone in the household has a disability. ODOE is exploring ways to create more inclusive communications and program outreach to ensure environmental justice communities have access and can participate in programs. Funding for the Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program was fully reserved as of May 2024, and ODOE is no longer accepting applications.
- [Energy Efficient Wildfire Rebuilding Incentive Program](#) was developed after more than 5,000 structures and over 1 million acres were burned in the wildfires that devastated Oregon

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communities over Labor Day weekend in 2020. HB 5006 allocated about \$10.8 million in General Fund dollars to ODOE to incentivize energy efficient rebuilding of residential and commercial structures that were destroyed by wildfires in 2020. This program prioritized environmental justice communities by providing higher incentives for low- and moderate-income households. This program stopped accepting applications on June 30, 2025.

- [Community Renewable Energy Grant Program](#) was authorized in HB 2021 to create a \$50 million fund at ODOE to provide grants for planning and developing community renewable energy and energy resilience projects (the Legislature allocated an additional \$20 million to the program in 2023-2025). The program rules were created through feedback and support of the [Community Renewable Energy Grant Program Advisory Committee](#), which includes representatives of environmental justice organizations. The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program is open to Oregon Tribes, public bodies, and consumer-owned utilities. At least 50 percent of the grant funds must be awarded for projects that serve environmental justice communities, as defined in legislation. There were [34 awardees](#) of this grant in 2024, including Tribes, schools, and governments that qualify as Justice40's disadvantaged communities. An additional round of awardees will be announced in early 2026.
- [Heat Pump Incentive Programs](#) were created in response to the heat dome event of 2021, during which at least 100 Oregonians died of heat-related illness—often in their own homes. The legislature passed SB 1536, the development of which was led by environmental justice organizations. The bill directed ODOE to develop a \$10 million [Community Heat Pump Deployment Program](#), create a \$15 million [Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program](#) for installation of heat pumps by landlords, fund a \$2 million grant for a community cooling center program for extreme heat events, and conduct a [cooling needs study](#) to identify existing cooling—as well as barriers to cooling access—in government supported housing. As of the end of 2025, the Rental Home Heat Pump Program has provided funding for more than 3,700 heat pump installations in Oregon rental properties. The Community Heat Pump Deployment Program has obligated funding to administrators in 11 state economic development regions and two federally recognized Tribes to support heat pump installation in communities across the state.

## Energy Facility Siting

The Energy Facility Siting Division works with energy developers proposing new facilities and current operators of energy facilities to meet the state's energy needs by ensuring large electrical generating facilities, transmission lines, and natural gas pipelines and other large energy facilities are built, operated, and retired consistent with Oregon's energy policy, as well as air, water, land use, cultural resource, natural resource, safety, and other policies. This division provides staff support to the seven-member Governor-appointed and Senate-confirmed [Energy Facility Siting Council](#) (EFSC), coordinates the energy facility siting process, oversees compliance with existing facility site certificates, and coordinates key federal energy siting projects for the state. The Division coordinates input about proposed new facilities or amendments to existing facilities from Tribes, other state agencies, local governments, contractors, and the public.

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The Oregon Department of Energy facilitates the Energy Facility Siting Council facility siting process, which consolidates the statutes, rules, ordinances, regulations, policies, and permits of Tribal governments, state agencies, and local governments (collectively known as Reviewing Agencies) into a single review process for the state. Potentially affected Tribal governments are identified after consultation with the Legislative Commission on Indian Services. While Tribal governments are considered Reviewing Agencies in the EFSC process, ODOE also recognizes that the federally recognized Tribes are sovereign nations and directly communicates with each tribal government uniquely. Reviewing Agencies are notified and requested to review and provide comments throughout the process, and they are eligible to receive reimbursement for any time spent reviewing and providing feedback.



*ODOE has published a series of [energy facility siting “spotlights”](#) on the agency blog to help the public better understand Oregon’s process.*

The Review is a [standards-based process](#) that includes the following steps:

1. Notice of intent (high level overview of the proposed project) submitted by developer
  - a. Notice with public comment period
  - b. Public informational meeting in the vicinity of the project
  - c. Memo to Reviewing Agencies and a request to review and comment
2. Project order (list of the applicable requirements that must be included in the application) completed by Siting Division staff
3. Application for site certificate submitted by developer
  - a. Review of preliminary application by the Department and Reviewing Agencies
  - b. Notice to the public when application is deemed complete
  - c. Public informational meeting in the vicinity of the project
4. Draft proposed order (Department’s first recommendation of whether proposed project meets all requirements) completed by Siting Division Staff
  - a. Public and reviewing agency notice with comment period
  - b. Public hearing in the vicinity of the project and in front of EFSC
5. Proposed order (Department’s second recommendation of whether proposed project meets all requirements, taking into consideration all comments received during the Draft Proposed Order stage) completed by Siting Division staff
6. Contested case proceeding (if requested; run by an independent third-party hearing officer)
7. Final order and site certificate, if the project is approved by Energy Facility Siting Council
8. If appealed, consideration by Oregon Supreme Court (which has a six-month deadline to issue their final opinion)

Siting is a standards-based process which means there are formalized rules, governance, and legislation that dictates what requirements must be met. It is the applicant’s burden to prove through a preponderance of evidence that they meet all requirements. [Siting standards](#) include soil protection; land use; protected areas; fish and wildlife habitat; historical, cultural, and archaeological resources; wildfire prevention and risk mitigation, and more. Many of these standards intersect with environmental

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justice communities geographically as well as with environmental justice concerns at large – though at the time of the standards’ creation, ‘environmental justice’ was not a used framework or definition.

The structure of Siting’s substantive and procedural standards requires the team to think linearly and in terms of legal obligations. While the standards are immovable, the team has found ways to engage environmental justice communities in the process with the goal of eliciting more participation and feedback from those who will be the most affected by a project. One way this may be seen is in the effort to provide as much lead time as possible for community participation through public comment, information meetings, and hearing processes. While the rules dictate people must be given at least 21 days to comment on the Draft Proposed Order, the Siting team will set the comment period as high as 60 days for more complicated and controversial projects. Additionally, they host meetings both in-person and virtually to support multiple methods of participation, travel to project areas to reduce location barriers, and hold hearings in the evening. In 2025 there were three public informational meetings about proposed projects:

- March – Deschutes Solar and Battery Energy Storage System Facility - Maupin
- April – Sunrise Solar and Storage Project – Boardman
- September – Yellow Rosebush Energy Center - Maupin

There were nine [Energy Facility Siting Council meetings](#):

- Eight in Salem
- One in Maupin

While the Siting team collects information, analyzes standards, and hosts meetings, the Energy Facility Siting Council is the decision-making entity. The Council is not legally required to attend Draft Proposed Order hearings, though because they so strongly value hearing directly from affected communities, being present for these hearings is now a standard part of the process.

The Energy Facility Siting Council has its own rules and standards for the siting, construction, and oversight of energy facilities and other areas within the Council’s subject matter jurisdiction, including the regulation of radioactive materials and wastes. It annually establishes a [rulemaking](#) schedule to evaluate specific rules to improve their efficiency and effectiveness and to reflect changes in energy markets. Key rulemaking activities include identifying potential rulemaking actions, prioritization by the Energy Facility Siting Council, and establishing broadly represented rulemaking advisory committees to help Department staff draft proposed rules, as appropriate. In 2025, there was rulemaking to encourage early contact between Tribal governments and prospective developers of large energy facilities prior to the Notice of Intent stage. ODOE requested consultation and feedback on proposed draft language of Tribes through government-to-government letters and presentations to the Legislative Commission of Indian Services Resource Cluster group. We recognize that Tribes are sovereign nations and not included in the definition of environmental justice communities; however, we value this as an example of meaningful engagement and coordination.

A goal of the Energy Facility Siting Division is to provide **culturally responsible and respectful communications and opportunities** for participation throughout the process.

The Siting Division annually establishes a process improvement work plan to focus current process improvement activities and report on completion of past activities. Selected projects are intentionally aligned with the Department of Energy’s Strategic Plan, the Siting Division’s Program Improvement



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Goals, as well as interests expressed by other interested parties of state energy facility siting. Recent examples include:

- Working with ODOE’s Communications staff to create YouTube video tutorials to help the public better understand the state siting process and ways in which they can participate; these will be available in early 2026
- Updating the public comment portal to make it easier for the public to provide comments on active projects
- Updating Rulemaking webpages to allow easier tracking and participation in Energy Facility Siting Council rulemakings

In 2025, the Oregon Department of Energy and the Energy Facility Siting Council reviewed and approved applications for site certificates and certificate holder requests for site certificate amendments (changes to approved site certificates) for one underground natural gas storage facility, three solar PV energy facilities; and one wind energy facility. These facilities include [Mist Underground Natural Gas Storage Facility Amendment 13](#) (Columbia County); [Madras Solar Energy Facility Amendment 1](#) (Jefferson County); [Obsidian Solar Center Amendment 2](#) (Lake County); [Leaning Juniper IIB Wind Power Project Amendment 3](#) (Gilliam County); [Sunset Solar Project Amendment 1](#) (Wasco County); and [Sunstone Solar Project Amendment 1](#) (Morrow County). The Sunstone Solar Project is potentially shifting ownership as the site certificate holder, Pine Gate Renewables, claimed Chapter 11. Amazon recently bid \$83 million to take over the site certificate. At the time of this report, neither Pine Gate Renewables nor Amazon has submitted a request to transfer the site certificate. ODOE highlighted the Sunstone project in the [2024 Environmental Justice Council Annual Report](#). Several other new applications and amendments were in various stages of review in 2025 but did not receive formal approval from Council during the calendar year. Of note is the [Cascade Renewable Energy Transmission System](#), still in an early review stage, which proposes a 100-mile transmission cable in the bed of Columbia River between The Dalles and Portland.

## Nuclear Safety and Energy Security

The [Nuclear Safety & Energy Security](#) Division works to protect the environment and Oregonians from exposure to hazards by monitoring and engaging in radioactive waste cleanup activities at the Hanford Nuclear Site; preparing and testing nuclear emergency preparedness plans; and implementing Oregon’s radioactive waste disposal regulations. The Division also leads the agency’s work on energy emergency preparedness. In the event of a fuel shortage either state-wide or locally, the division will implement the state’s Oregon Fuel Action Plan to manage fuel supply to emergency and essential services.

In 2025, ODOE staff updated and submitted the state’s [Energy Security Plan](#), which assesses threats and risks to all energy systems in Oregon and proposes measures to mitigate identified risks. The Energy Security Plan was supported with federal funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and includes engagement and coordination with Tribal Governments as well as government entities, interested organizations, and the public. [SB 1567](#) (Section 12. (E)(3)(a)) requires ODOE to consult with the Environmental Justice Council in this work. ODOE sent a memo to the Council in March 2025 requesting consultation; however, the Council did not respond.

Relatedly, in 2023, the Oregon Legislature passed HB 3630, which directed ODOE to create a grant program to support Oregon counties with funding for energy resilience planning. The [County Energy](#)

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[Resilience Grant Program](#) offered up to \$50,000 per county to develop an energy resilience plan, which can provide more granular details to the State’s Energy Security Plan described above. Nineteen counties accepted the funding and are required to engage with environmental justice communities to identify and map communities that experience social vulnerabilities as part of the Plan. Plans are due at the end of 2025, though at the time of this report, sixteen counties have received an extension with a new due date of June 30, 2026.

The NSES team is also responsible for representing Oregon’s interest in the clean-up of the Hanford Nuclear site. The NSES team supports the Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board, which includes a representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and met three times in 2025.

NSES division staff also represent Oregon on the Hanford Natural Resources Trustee Council, which is responsible for conducting the Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) and Restoration at the Hanford site. The HNRTC actively worked on assessment and planning activities throughout 2025. The Council membership includes the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Yakama Nation, in addition to the states of Oregon and Washington and federal agencies.

## STRATEGIC PLAN

ODOE’s [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#) helped prioritize, measure progress, and strengthen alignment between agency goals, programs, and budget. The plan was implemented through five Strategic Imperatives:

1. Expand and Improve External Engagement
2. Build Practices and Processes to Achieve more Inclusive and Equitable Outcomes
3. Assess and Enhance Organizational Data Capabilities
4. Assess and Modernize Agency Programs and Activities
5. Optimize Organizational Efficiency and Impact

Through this plan, ODOE focused on how to improve awareness of the agency’s work and expand and improve engagement with a core focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Outcomes of this work include developing new partnership models and approaches, understanding and investing in community needs and impacts, using the agency’s position to create change, and committing to doing internal equity work. ODOE published a [final implementation report](#) in 2025.

The Oregon Department of Energy is in the process of developing its [2026-2029 plan](#) with our consultant, [Pivotal](#), and expects to roll out the new plan in early 2026. Input and analysis thus far show interest in ensuring our strategic plan focuses on proactive communication, accessible programs, and other themes that are of interest to the Environmental Justice Council. Strategic plans are set for four years and then revisited and revised in the fifth year to produce the next four-year plan.

While the last strategic plan did not explicitly include “environmental justice” in its approach, it did lead to a [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Implementation Plan and Strategic Approach](#) which has created a strong foundation to better include environmental justice in the new strategic plan.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PRACTICES ORS 182.550

The Oregon Department of Energy relies on the definition for environmental justice and environmental justice communities that is in [HB 4077](#).

To meaningfully involve communities in decision-making, ODOE relies on many methods and processes that are dependent both on the program/project and the community. This may include hosting working groups, advisory groups, and councils; providing translated materials, meeting times outside of workday hours (both in person and virtually), additional opportunities to provide written comments, and webinars to help Oregonians be informed and give feedback; working with trusted external partners and organizations; developing tools and data sharing platforms; and more. The Strategic Engagement Analyst is developing a framework that addresses how programs/projects can best practice meaningful engagement and plans to collaborate with external partners as well as agency staff to meet multiple needs.

One example of ODOE's approach to meaningful engagement in 2025 was through the development of the [Oregon Energy Strategy](#). In July 2023, the Legislature passed HB 3630, adopting ODOE's recommendation from the 2022 Biennial Energy Report to develop an Oregon Energy Strategy. The legislation directed ODOE to develop an Energy Strategy that identifies pathways to achieving the state's energy policy objectives, and to deliver a report to the Governor and Legislature. It also requires a robust engagement process, calling on ODOE to engage with federally recognized Tribes, relevant state agencies, and public partners to inform the Energy Strategy. The Oregon Energy Strategy team hosted three public informational webinars, three public listening sessions, one in-person public report out, seven advisory group meetings, and 17 working group meetings. There was a total of five working groups, and each working group represented a specific area of expertise. The Environmental Justice and Equity Working Group brought together 27 people from organizations across the state with a wide variety of expertise at the intersection of environmental justice, equity, and energy justice. This group worked together to provide feedback and expertise in the development of the [Equity and Justice Framework](#). ODOE worked with [Kearns and West](#) to provide compensation to participants who were living in or representing environmental justice communities. As stated in previous reports, the ability to appropriately compensate participants for their expertise is complex and challenging at the state level, it was very helpful to have the support of a third-party consultant who was able to ensure this best practice. ODOE provided memos to the Environmental Justice Council throughout the process; the agency did not receive a response.

In August 2023, ODOE and the Coalition of Communities of Color began co-convening the Environmental Justice Leaders Workgroup for Federal Funding for organizations that serve environmental justice communities to share information and provide more transparency throughout the federal grant funding process. The organizations that participated found the share-outs helpful and wanted more opportunities to provide feedback. The Coalition of Communities of Color was awarded separate foundation funding to co-host future workshops and provides a stipend to qualifying, participating organizations who joined the workgroup. With this funding, ODOE and the Coalition formalized the approach to prioritize the voices of environmental justice communities. The goals of this Environmental Justice Leaders Workgroup are to: (1) share information about energy-related federal funding opportunities, (2) match opportunities to needs, (3) ensure metrics and data are demonstrating benefits flowing to environmental justice and/or disadvantaged communities, and (4) create a forum to share experiences across organizations.

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This workgroup met 10 times virtually and one time in person in 2025 and discussed:

- The changing federal funding landscape
- The County Energy Resilience Grant (both before and after funding had been distributed)
- Solar for All (before the Environmental Protection Agency rescinded this funding)
- The Oregon Energy Strategy
- Geospatial mapping and data needs
- Technical assistance from national organizations
- Programs and projects within Energy Trust of Oregon
- ODOE's 2026 – 2029 Strategic Plan
- Energy resilience and reliability
- Potential state and foundation funding

The [Community Navigator program](#) was launched after ODOE's bill in the 2023 session passed as part of HB 3630. This program aims to connect environmental justice communities (particularly Tribal, rural and coastal communities, and communities with limited infrastructure) with energy information and resources. The program is designed to empower communities in accessing opportunities from the state and federal governments to achieve their energy goals. The Community Navigator program is supported by one full time staff person and has been also supported by a RARE AmeriCorps member, who worked with ODOE through an intergovernmental agreement between ODOE and the [University of Oregon's Resource Assistance for Rural Environments \(RARE\) program](#). The RARE program is an AmeriCorps program and funding was unstable during the year, at one point fully stopping. ODOE was able to partner with the [Illinois Valley Community Development Organization](#) to continue to contract the RARE member until the end of their appointment. At this point, the RARE program has been defunded by the federal government, and it is unknown if their 2025 – 2028 application will be accepted; ODOE will not be able to host a RARE in 2026 due to this uncertainty but is exploring other contracting mechanisms to support communities.

Since 2023, the Community Navigator has participated in meetings or events in all 36 Oregon Counties in person and met with all nine federally recognized Tribes in person on Tribal land. In total, the Community Navigator Program has logged over 25,000 miles since 2023, a distance that is equivalent to circumnavigating the entire globe. In 2025, the Community Navigator Program met with eight federally recognized Tribes, four in person, and traveled to 22 counties. A significant accomplishment of the program was its work with the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program; through their work with eligible communities, the Community Navigator Program was able to help bring forward 25 percent of the applications to this Program in its fourth funding round.

Another way we work to increase public participation is through access to tools and data that provide information to communities so that they can determine potential opportunities and burdens in their space. [The Oregon Renewable Energy Siting Assessment \(ORESAs\)](#) is a mapping and reporting tool that has many layers that allow people to explore a geographic area of interest with options like energy burden, land type, soil class, threatened and endangered species, and much more. The underlying spatial data utilized in ORESAs was determined through community workgroups to identify essential intersecting spatial information of land-use, economic, and environmental concerns. All these spatial data layers allow a user to also generate a simplified report of the opportunities and constraints associated with a potential wind, solar or geothermal energy project in any geographic boundary in Oregon chosen by the user.

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While there was significant participation in processes across the agency in 2025, there are opportunities to develop more robust engagement strategies that include culturally specific outreach, develop more translated materials, and hear more ideas from communities as to how they would like to be involved in decision-making and potential beneficial outcomes.

## AGENCY SCOPED ENVIRONMENTAL AND/OR HEALTH BURDENS ORS 182.535

ODOE understands “scoped” to mean the areas the agency examines to best review environmental and health burdens within environmental exposures, environmental hazards, climate change risks, the built environment, and human health. ODOE recognizes this work must be done across departments and programs to best address environmental justice issues and provide recommendations through reports and policy development work. Some examples of these efforts are:

- [Radioactive Material Transport in Oregon](#)
- [Oregon Energy Security Plan](#)
- [Energy Facility Siting](#) processes
- In coordination with the [Oregon Climate Action Commission](#) data on current [greenhouse gas emissions](#), trends, and steps we need to take to reduce emissions and the [Transformational Integrated Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Project](#)
- [Land-Based Net Carbon Inventory](#)
- [Natural Climates Solutions Metrics and Goals](#)
- [Natural Climate Solutions Workforce Development and Training Program Needs study](#)
- [Biennial Energy Report](#)
- [Oregon Energy Strategy](#)
- [Biennial Oregon Heat Pump Report](#)
- [Energy Efficiency and Conservation programs](#)
- [Codes and Standards](#)
- And many other [studies and reports](#)

The Oregon Department of Energy works with many other state agencies in their work including:

- Oregon Department of Administrative Services
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Business Oregon
- Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services, Building Codes Division
- Department of Emergency Management
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
- The Governor’s Office
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Housing and Community Services
- Oregon Department of Human Services



- Oregon Department of Justice
- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
- Legislative Policy and Research Office
- Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Oregon Public Utility Commission
- Oregon Department of State Lands
- Oregon State University
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EFFORTS ORS 182.550 AND 182.535

Environmental justice efforts include developing programs and projects that involve environmental justice communities in processes through webinars, community meetings, building relationships with governments and organizations who serve environmental justice communities, and providing informational materials in multiple languages. Progress of environmental justice efforts is not formally evaluated, though ODOE has frequent conversations with external parties through the Community Navigator Program staff, Government Relations Coordinator, and other ODOE staff to learn more about what is working well and what can be done better.

ODOE’s federal grant agreements include the Justice40 Initiative, which uses the language “disadvantaged communities.” While there is some overlap in the definition it is important to note that the federal language does not include communities of color or geographically specific areas of the state, such as rural or coastal. ODOE frequently relies on household income data to determine goals for reaching disadvantaged communities and this may be similar or the same for reaching some environmental justice communities.

As the state continues to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move toward a clean energy transition, it is important to explicitly bring along environmental justice communities through all stages of the planning process through implementation and revision. If environmental justice communities are excluded or disenfranchised then they may not receive equitable benefits including affordability, resilience, and reliability.

One way that ODOE hopes to be able to better evaluate progress and determine how to best serve environmental justice communities in decision-making processes and implementation outcomes is through the environmental justice mapping tool. The ODOE agency liaison to the Environmental Justice Council will continue to support the efforts of developing the tool by attending meetings, participating in discussions, and asking for the expertise of data analysts within the department.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COUNCIL CITED LEGISLATION

There are specific legislative bills that require ODOE to consult the Environmental Justice Council. ODOE has submitted memos throughout the year asking the Council how they would like to participate in the consultation process.

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- [HB 3409](#):
  - Section 2 (2)(e); “In carrying out a designated state agency program, an agency described in subsection (1)(a) of this section shall consider actions to aid in achieving greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals that include, but are not limited to... (e) Consistent with applicable federal and state laws, consulting with the Oregon Global Warming Commission and the Environmental Justice Council and using, when appropriate, the environmental justice mapping tool developed under section 12, chapter 58, Oregon Laws 2022, when considering or evaluating for development or implementation the policies and actions described in this subsection.
    - ODOE is responsible for publishing a biennial [heat pump report](#) which is due in September. ODOE sent a memo requesting consultation to the Council on March 6, 2025. The next report will be due in 2027.
- [SB 1567](#):
  - Section 12 (3)(a) “ODOE will consult with local governments, tribal governments, and the Environmental Justice Council to develop the [energy security plan](#)...”
    - ODOE is required to update it annually and submit the report in September. ODOE sent a memo requesting consultation to the Council on March 6, 2025.
- [HB 2021](#):
  - Section 32 (1) says: “SECTION 32. Advisory committee. The Director of the State Department of Energy may appoint an Advisory Committee on Community Renewable Investment to provide consultation on the implementation of sections 29 to 32 of this 2021 Act. A committee appointed under this section shall consist of: (1) A member of the Environmental Justice Task Force.”
    - The Community Renewable Energy Grant Program created an advisory committee as the program was developed to elicit feedback. At the time, a member of the Environmental Justice Council was a part of the committee, though they were listed under their organization affiliation. The committee did not meet in 2025 but was sent memos to inform them of updates. There is potential for the committee to come together in early 2026 to provide them with an update on round four results of the grant. The funding for the program was not renewed in the 2025 legislative session and we anticipate the final round in late 2026 or early 2027.

ODOE looks forward to future Council consultation on the Energy Security Plan annually and the next Biennial Heat Pump Report in 2027.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The current lack of clarity and stability in the federal government affects the way we can serve environmental justice communities through federal grants. Challenges are also arising through federal actions like the executive order “[Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing](#),” which includes “... the termination of all discriminatory programs, including illegal DEI and “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the Federal Government, under whatever name they appear.” While this instability continues, ODOE needs continued support from the Environmental Justice Council to navigate compliance with federal requirements while also meeting the needs of environmental justice

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communities in Oregon. The environmental justice mapping tool the Council is developing will be helpful in this effort.

In the 2024 report to the Environmental Justice Council, ODOE named the following agency needs and is listing them again in this report as we continue to look to the Council for support in overcoming these challenges:

- **Staff capacity and training:** increase staff capacity to better understand environmental justice with the necessary training. Many natural resource agencies would benefit from staff dedicated to environmental justice to set and articulate a vision for environmental justice, develop agency level policies and procedures, and support practices across teams. Providing new and existing staff with enterprise-wide, required training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging concepts will establish a level setting foundation. This would enable agencies to build off this foundation with more advanced training in environmental justice (e.g. identifying communities, environmental justice assessments, environmental justice engagement strategies, etc.) and related training such as facilitation, conflict management, plain language, and culturally relevant communication.
- **Increase funding and budget support:** increased funding is crucial to support environmental justice efforts. This includes budget support for staff positions, community engagement activities and events, community compensation for participation, legal costs, training, translation services, tools, and specific program initiatives. Last year, the agency had state funding for incentive programs that prioritized environmental justice communities; this year, with most of those programs no longer funded, those communities cannot be served.
- **Enterprise-wide policies and guidance:** The establishment of enterprise-wide policies, associated funding, and clear statewide direction on contracts and contracting to address priorities such as language translation and interpretation, community engagement vendor contracting, community compensation for participation, and administrative and legal support. This comprehensive approach is essential for the effective implementation of environmental justice policies.
- **Leadership and interagency collaboration on tools and resources:** it is important for agency leadership to consistently advocate for and resource environmental justice policies, opportunities for interagency collaboration, and guidance for staff. State agencies currently participate in the DAS Office of Cultural Change quarterly DEI Cohorts, which is a current example of interagency collaboration. Agency leadership continued participation in the DAS Office of Cultural Change quarterly DEI Cohorts can support this effort, but this alone will not address collaboration needs related to environmental justice. Agencies need interagency collaboration to share resources, best practices, and tools to effectively engage with environmental justice communities including GIS and data collection tools, translation services, communication platforms, and outreach materials. Coordination of agency community engagement also addresses concerns about overburdening community-based organizations and community member capacity when seeking feedback for public processes such as rulemaking, listening sessions, focus groups, etc.
- **Some limitations and barriers to community participation exist,** such as the lack of resources and employee time to dedicate to staffing energy specific programs. Additionally, many environmental justice groups have complex relationships with government entities that are rooted in mistrust, in part due to a lack of follow-through from agencies throughout history and

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currently. ODOE recognizes the importance of slowing down to build long-standing and ongoing relationships to demonstrate commitment to our environmental justice communities who have been and are marginalized and ignored.

- **There is a need to provide greater technical and contracting assistance** to Tribal governments, environmental justice agencies, and municipal governments from the state. The Community Navigator Program works to fulfill these needs and we recognize there is more need than capacity within the agency.

Through any federal or state funding challenges or capacity constraints, ODOE is clear in its mission and will continue to uphold its prioritization of environmental justice communities throughout its work as it remains possible through statute, legislative program design, and funding.

## DEFINITIONS

### **Environmental Justice: (ORS 182.535 Section 3)**

“Environmental justice” means the equal protection from environmental and health risks, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in decision making of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, income or other identities with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn and practice spirituality and culture.

### **Environmental Justice Community: (ORS 182.535 Section 4)**

“Environmental justice community” includes communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, tribal communities, rural communities, remote communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth and persons with disabilities.

### **Meaningful Involvement: (ORS 182.535 Section 7)**

“Meaningful involvement” means:

- (a) Members of vulnerable populations have appropriate opportunities to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
- (b) Public involvement can influence a decision maker’s decision;
- (c) The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision-making process; and
- (d) Decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of members of vulnerable populations

### **Environmental Burdens: (ORS 182.535 Section 2)**

“Environmental burden” means the environmental and health risks to communities caused by the combined historic, current and projected future effects of:

- (a) Exposure to conventional pollution and toxic hazards in the air or in or on water or land;
- (b) Adverse environmental conditions caused or made worse by other contamination or pollution; and
- (c) Changes in the environment resulting from climate change, such as water insecurity, drought, flooding, wildfire, smoke and other air pollution, extreme heat, loss of traditional cultural resources or foods, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and increases in infectious disease.



## APPENDIX A: RELEVANT LAW

### [House Bill 4077 \(2022\)](#)

Legislation establishing the Environmental Justice Council, the Council’s responsibility to develop an environmental justice mapping tool, develop a biannual report to the Governor, and the requirement for natural resource agencies to submit an annual report to the Environmental Justice Council.

### [Senate Bill 420 \(2007\)](#)

Legislation establishing the Environmental Justice Task Force, the predecessor for the Environmental Justice Council. It also includes requirements for the Task Force to submit biannual reports to the Governor and the requirement for natural resource agencies to submit an annual report to the Environmental Justice Task Force.

### [ORS 182.550 Reports by natural resource agencies](#)

All directors of natural resource agencies, and other agency directors as the Governor may designate, shall report annually to the Environmental Justice Task Force and to the Governor on the results of the agencies’ efforts to:

1. Address environmental justice issues;
2. Increase public participation of individuals and communities affected by agencies’ decisions;
3. Determine the effect of the agencies’ decisions on environmental justice communities;
4. Improve plans to further the progress of environmental justice in Oregon; and
5. Utilize the environmental justice mapping tool developed under section 12 of this 2022 Act.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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