Oregon Statewide Data Center Advisory Committee

Overview

Oregon is experiencing unprecedented demand from large-scale energy users including data centers and artificial intelligence, creating a need to establish clear siting criteria and assessment protocols before further development occurs across our state's landscape. Proactive planning in partnership with local governments is essential to protect Oregon's iconic forests and farmlands, sustain thriving local economies, and preserve affordability for all Oregonians.

The advisory committee will be tasked with developing recommendations for a comprehensive regulatory framework to strategically pursue economic development opportunities, in line with the work of Governor Kotek's Prosperity Roadmap, while ensuring utility costs, infrastructure investments, and environmental impacts remain sustainable and equitable for all residents, especially low-income and working families.

The goal of the advisory committee is to develop policy recommendations that will help Oregon to take strategic advantage of the economic development opportunity created by new data centers and other large-load industrial consumers of electricity, while striving to keep utility costs, infrastructure upgrades, and environmental impacts sustainable for all Oregonians, particularly low-income and working households and ratepayers. Margaret Hoffmann, Oregon Council Member on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and Michael Jung, energy and climate policy professional, will serve as the co-chairs of the advisory committee.

The advisory committee will conduct an open and public process to understand challenges and opportunities in key policy areas related to the siting of data centers in our state, and then recommend actions that the State of Oregon can take to:

- Encourage data center siting decisions that support responsible economic development, create jobs, and increase long-term revenue that will strengthen our rural communities;
- Understand how the development of data centers affects and can help Oregon meet its climate, clean energy, and natural resource management goals;
- Ensure data centers have reliable energy without burdening Oregon's ratepayers;
- Protect Oregon's limited water resources in the face of growing demand from data centers while recognizing available clean water is imperative to both existing

economic sectors such as agriculture and the growth of new and more diversified local economies; and

- Identify key issue areas needing to be addressed to develop a policy framework that will help guide the state in the responsible siting of data centers moving forward.

Scope and Process

The statewide Oregon Data Center Advisory Committee will:

- Conduct a comprehensive literature review of other states' existing regulatory frameworks;
- Direct a fact-finding process to understand the scope and drivers of data center development in Oregon;
- Compile information from key stakeholders regarding potential impacts to jobs and the economy, energy, water, land use; and
- Develop a set of actions and recommendations to the Governor.

Timeline

- The advisory committee will convene in early 2026 and will hold one public meeting per month for six months to address key intersections and issues, including but not limited to:
    o Scoping and foundation-setting
    o Energy
    o Water
    o Land use
    o Economic Development and affordability
    o Accountability and public engagement
- Each meeting will be open to the public, including with opportunities for public comment.
- The advisory committee will develop and finalize a report to Governor Tina Kotek by October 2026.