



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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September 29, 2026

Governor Tina Kotek
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek,

I am writing to transmit three major deliverables required under Executive Order 25-29: a report on Siting and Permitting Large-Scale Electricity Infrastructure, a report on Reducing Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment, and a Proposed Framework for Strategic Transmission Siting. Together, these reports and proposed framework address the issue of how to accelerate the pace at which clean energy projects and associated transmission infrastructure are permitted, built, and brought online. These efforts will ultimately support access to the energy needed for Oregon homes and businesses to continue to grow and thrive.

As articulated in the Oregon Energy Strategy and amplified in the executive order, demand for electricity is rising far faster than in recent history, driven by new data centers along with electrification, industrial growth, and climate change-driven reliability challenges. At the same time, many state-approved clean energy projects are struggling to move into construction because local and federal permitting processes are stressed, interconnection timelines and costs are increasing, supply chains are constrained, and the transmission system has become a limiting factor for nearly every major project. EO 25-29 asked agencies to diagnose these challenges and propose a coordinated, proactive state response. Alongside the Department of Land Conservation and Development's report, [*Accelerating Clean Energy Deployment Through Oregon's Land Use Planning Framework*](#), the attached documents fulfill that directive and recommend concrete steps the state can take today to help us meet this challenge.

Although each deliverable has a distinct scope, they collectively describe a unified story in which Oregon cannot reliably, affordably, and sustainably meet our energy needs without modernizing siting and permitting; addressing barriers that stall projects after approval; and accelerating the development of new transmission.

The [*Report on Siting and Permitting Large-Scale Electricity Infrastructure*](#) focuses on the Energy Facility Siting Council and the parallel roles counties play when projects fall outside EFSC jurisdiction. EFSC's consolidated statewide process remains a strong foundation, offering consistency, clear standards, and thoughtful integration of environmental protections and public engagement. However, the scale and urgency of today's clean energy transition may exceed the capacity of the system as currently structured. The system is being strained as projects are larger, more complex, and more controversial than those typically reviewed when Oregon's siting framework was created nearly five decades ago. Contested case proceedings, staffing constraints, and coordination demands across multiple agencies and jurisdictions all

contribute to extended timelines. Counties face similar pressures, often without the technical staff or subject matter expertise needed to evaluate the cultural, ecological, and system-wide effects of large renewable projects. Tribes have emphasized that generation and transmission projects increasingly affect culturally significant landscapes, First Foods, treaty reserved rights, and ecological resources. These realities make early, meaningful, and well-resourced Tribal consultation essential.

In this report, ODOE recommends several updates, including additional staffing and management capacity within our siting division; streamlining certain procedural steps such as completeness review and contested cases; enhancing early coordination with applicants, Tribes, and reviewing agencies; modernizing certain standards; and exploring AI-based tools, where appropriate. The agency can start making progress on some of these recommendations now, will undertake rulemaking to advance others, and will need additional resources or authority from the legislature to pursue the rest.

The [Reducing Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment](#) report expands the lens beyond siting and examines the difficulties projects face after receiving a site certificate or county permit. As of 2026, over 3,000 megawatts of approved clean energy projects have yet to begin construction. The report identifies seven major post-permitting barriers that prevent projects from breaking ground: cost pressures, unexpected delays, limited cross-jurisdictional coordination, limited availability of equipment and supplies, insufficient staffing, unmet workforce needs, and limited grid capacity. These barriers often interact. Even when Oregon’s permitting processes function well, projects often stall because other development steps – navigating interconnection studies, securing power purchase agreements, or financing network upgrades – are slow, unpredictable, or financially risky. Interconnection queues have become a significant bottleneck, with cascading re-studies, rising cost estimates, and multi-year timelines. A project’s path to construction may depend as much on transmission availability and interconnection costs as on its siting or land use approval.

The Reducing Barriers report recommends steps within and outside of state jurisdiction to overcome the barriers. The report’s recommendations include providing targeted state incentives for clean energy projects that deliver local benefits; supporting and encouraging transmission expansion; monitoring and defending against disruptive federal policy changes; increasing agency staffing; continuing cross-jurisdictional discussions on interconnection and permitting alignment; and prioritizing support for clean energy workers. The report also acknowledges that even as the state moves to overcome barriers, there are limitations to how quickly new large-scale facilities can be built. It therefore includes “complementary recommendations” to advance energy efficiency, load flexibility, and small-scale energy resources across the state, which may be deployable faster than large-scale facilities. It finds that regional cooperation and advancement of wholesale energy markets may reduce costs and improve market signals for these projects.

Finally, the [Proposed Framework for Strategic Transmission Siting](#), which is not a formal report but instead a proposal from ODOE for discussion, addresses one of the most consequential barriers identified in the Reducing Barriers report: Oregon does not have sufficient transmission infrastructure to support projected load growth or enable clean energy projects to interconnect to the grid. Lack of transmission capacity is already creating bottlenecks for wind and solar projects throughout the region and is starting to be identified as a limiting factor for economic development opportunities.

The Framework draws on ODOE’s research and discussions with experts and interested parties to examine Oregon’s fragmented transmission planning system, under which there is no one entity capable of setting statewide priorities. In addition to complex and time-consuming siting and permitting processes, there are challenges associated with planning and financing the necessary infrastructure. The proposed framework recommends establishing a dedicated statewide transmission planning and coordination function—either within an existing agency or a new entity—to identify priority transmission projects, coordinate regional engagement, seek and receive federal funding, and potentially serve as a transmission developer of last resort. It further recommends accelerating permitting for priority transmission projects with support from state transmission liaisons, improved coordination with federal agencies, expanded EFSC jurisdiction, and increased staffing capacity. It includes proposals to leverage state bonding authority, enable community benefits frameworks, reduce redundancy across processes, encourage siting in existing corridors, and scale non-wires alternatives such as battery storage, demand response, grid enhancing technologies, and energy efficiency. We hope the proposed framework will be useful in upcoming legislative and policy conversations.

Although each deliverable addresses a different stage of project development, they collectively outline a roadmap to support EO 25-29’s directive to “get clean energy projects built” and advance key elements of the Oregon Energy Strategy. The Oregon Department of Energy stands ready to act as quickly as we can on these recommendations, working in concert with your office, other natural resource agencies, Tribes, state and local governments, developers, the public, and the legislature to continue balancing energy needs and impacts for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Janine Be".

Janine Benner
Director