

ENERGY FACILITY SITING COUNCIL

CINDY CONDON, CHAIR ~ ANN BEIER, VICE CHAIR
KENT HOWE, RICHARD DEVLIN, PATRICIA PERRY, DENICE CALDERON, LES WALTON

Energy Facility Siting Council July 24, 2026 Meeting Minutes

ODOE Office/ Meitner Room
550 Capitol St. NE
Salem, Oregon

- A. Consent Calendar (Action & Information Item) - Approval of June 2026, Draft Meeting Minutes; Council Secretary Report; and other routine Council business.¹
- B. Wheatridge Renewable Energy Facility East Request for Amendment 2 – Proposed Order Public Hearing (Public Hearing)²
- C. Buckley Solar Facility Notice of Intent Extension Request (Action Item)³
- D. Radioactive Material Transport Fee Rulemaking (Public Hearing)⁴
- E. Public Comments (Information Item)⁵
- F. Soil, Structural & Waste Minimization Standard Phase III Informal Rulemaking Initiation (Action Item)⁶
- G. Annual Process Improvement Plan (Information Item)⁷
- H. Biglow Canyon Wind Farm-Appointment of Selection Committee Member for Community Investment Plan/Agricultural Mitigation (Action Item)⁸

¹ Audio/Video for Agenda Item A = 00:03:47 Part 1-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

² Audio/Video for Agenda Item B = 00:47:18 Part 1-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

³ Audio/Video for Agenda Item C = 01:35:20 Part 1-2026-07-24--EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

⁴ Audio/Video for Agenda Item D = 00:00:28 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

⁵ Audio/Video for Agenda Item E = 00:07:26 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

⁶ Audio/Video for Agenda Item F = 00:36:58 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

⁷ Audio/Video for Agenda Item G = 01:06:19 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

⁸ Audio/Video for Agenda Item H = 00:00:16 Part 3-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

- I. Oregon Trail Solar Amendment 2 – Request to Waive In-Vicinity Public Hearing (Action Item)⁹
- J. Executive Order 25-29 – Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Advancing Oregon’s Clean Energy Future (Information Item & Possible Action Item)¹⁰

The meeting materials presented to Council are available online at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/Pages/Council-Meetings.aspx>

Call to Order: Chair Condon called the meeting to order at 8:30 am

Roll Call

Energy Facility Siting Council Members present in person: Chair Cindy Condon, Vice Chair Ann Beier and Council Members Kent Howe, Richard Devlin, Denice Calderon, and Les Walton

A quorum was confirmed.

Oregon Department of Energy representatives present were Assistant Director for Siting/Council Secretary Todd Cornett, Senior Operations and Policy Analyst Sarah Esterson, Rules Coordinator Thomas Jackman, Operations and Policy Analyst Bibi Bartley, and Administrative Assistant Nancy Hatch. Oregon Department of Justice Senior Assistant Attorney General Patrick Rowe as also present.

Agenda Modifications

Secretary Cornett reported no agenda modifications.

Announcements

Chair Condon provided standard meeting instructions regarding audio etiquette, muting, Webex participation, comment procedures, and reminders of respectful conduct pursuant to OAR 345-011-0080. She also reminded attendees that the meeting audio and video were being recorded and may be posted online following the meeting.

- A. Consent Calendar (Action & Information Item)¹¹ - Approval of June 26, 2026, Draft Meeting Minutes; Council Secretary Report; and other routine Council business.

Approval of June 2026 Draft Meeting Minutes

Council Member Calderon motioned Council approve the June 2026 meeting minutes as presented.

⁹ Audio/Video for Agenda Item I = 00:14:34 Part 3-2026-06-25-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

¹⁰ Audio/Video for Agenda Item J = 00:37:34 Part 3-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

¹¹ Audio/Video for Agenda Item A = 00:03:47 Part 1-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Council Member Beier seconded.

Council Members Howe, Devlin and Walton abstained from the vote, as they had not attended the previous meeting.

Motion carried.

Secretary Report

Welcome to Les Walton, attending his first council meeting.

- Council Member Walton serves as the lead for energy operations at Oregon State University, overseeing core thermal and electrical infrastructure.
- He is a former U.S. Navy officer with experience in power generation, water and wastewater operations, and logistics.
- The Council extends its appreciation and welcomes him to the team.

Welcome back to Nancy Hatch.

- Appreciation is expressed to Bibi, Tom, and Sisily for assisting with logistics, preparation, and meeting operations during Nancy's absence.
- Nancy's return is strongly valued given the complexity and importance of her work.

Recruitment updates:

- Chris Clark has resigned and joined the Oregon Water Resources Department.
- Recruitment for his replacement is complete.
- Breylen Ammen, joining from the California Coastal Commission, where he performed similar regulatory and application review duties.
- His first day will be August 3rd.
- Compliance Officer recruitment remains in progress; an update is anticipated by the next council meeting.

Project Updates

Nolin Hills Wind Power Project

- Department received Amendment 1 request on July 17.
- Amendment seeks an extension of construction commencement and completion deadlines.
- Project: 600 MW wind and solar, Umatilla County; developer is Capital Power Corporation.
- Webpage updates and public notice for Amendment 1 are forthcoming.

Speedway Energy Center

- Preliminary application received on July 23.
- Proposed 1,400 MW solar facility in Sherman County; developer is Brookfield Renewables.
- Application will be posted next week.

Boardman-Hemingway Transmission Line

- Received landowner request for inspection regarding potential noncompliance related to impacts to a cultural resource on their property.
- Kellen Tardaewether, Senior Siting Analyst, is leading the evaluation.

- Council received a brief written summary from Ms. Tardaewether last week; full documentation and an additional summary will be provided after the Council meeting.
- As part of the Compliance Review, the Departments consultant had qualified archeologist conduct a site inspection.
- The Department concluded that there was not a violation of site certificate condition GEN-HC-01 for the reasons provided in the Compliance Evaluation and Response to Inspection Request.
- Further discussion can be scheduled in a future secretary report or council agenda if requested.

Compliance Updates

Stateline Wind Project (220MW, Umatilla County)

Facility includes Stateline I & II and Vancycle II; owned by NextEra Energy Resources.

- Blade bolt failures:
 - Six failures reported in 2026: two additional failures on July 2.
 - Two bolts found on the ground during turbine review: being investigated along with prior incidents and a previous blade fall.
 - Certificate holder assigned a team to diagnose and propose long-term fixes.
- Runaway turbine (July 17):
 - Turbine free-spinning; shutdown only possible when wind decreased.
- Light fixtures (July 15):
 - Two fixtures were found on the ground near a turbine.
- Issues appear concentrated at repowered units (Stateline I & II).

Vice Chair Beier asked whether all turbines involved share the same manufacturer.

Secretary Cornett noted the issues appear at repowered units. The manufacturer variation is likely.

Wheat Ridge Renewable Energy Facility One (100 MW, Morrow County)

- 40 turbines north of Heppner.
- Blade bolt failure (July 8):
 - Bolt was found on ground; broken access hatch handles also discovered.

Bigelow Canyon Wind Farm (450 MW, Sherman County)

- 217 turbines, 4 miles north of Wasco.
- Incident (June 30):
 - Blade root closeout door found on the ground.

Wagon Trail Solar (500 MW, Morrow County)

- Construction began June 26; NextEra project.
- Dust complaints (July 13):
 - Two complaints from gravel-hauling vehicles; water trucks increased; issue resolved by July 20.
- Equipment fire (July 1):

- Minor engine bay fire; quickly extinguished.
- Environmental buffer incursions:
 - Tire tracks in sensitive areas; determined to be landowner-caused.
 - Adaptive management: increased worker training, reinforced access rules, improved flagging.
- Surface disturbance (July 18):
 - Disturbance outside corridor from boring complications; work halted; further review pending.

Future Council Meetings

- August 20–21: Agenda items sufficient for meeting; location and exact schedule to be confirmed next week.
- September 17-18: TBD

Council Member Howe questioned the number of bolts holding a turbine blade.

Secretary Cornett stated he was unsure but noted the number would vary based on manufacturer.

Council Member Calderon stated her recommendation that ODOE review the commissioning team's workload and training, suggesting they may be overworked or undertrained. The incidents appear to be simple issues that should not occur, potentially caused by accelerated project timelines or budget pressures. She emphasized the importance of proper training and oversight to ensure the safety of workers and the successful completion of state projects.

B. Wheatridge Renewable Energy Facility East Request for Amendment 2 – Proposed Order Public Hearing (Public Hearing)¹²

Sarah Esterson (Senior Policy and Operations Analyst)

- Provided background on existing Wheatridge Renewable Energy Facility East: 300 MW wind farm, 107 turbines, 79,000 acres across Morrow & Umatilla counties.
- Noted 71 turbines (200 MW) were built in 2024 in Morrow County.
- Amendment 2 proposal:
 - Split current site certificate into Wheatridge East (built portion) and Wheat Ridge Northeast (unbuilt portion).
 - Wheatridge East: 71 constructed turbines.
 - Wheatridge Northeast: 36 unbuilt turbines (100 MW) plus shared transmission line.
 - Extend Wheatridge NE construction completion deadline to May 24, 2029.
- Summarized amendment process steps and proposed order findings (organizational expertise, financial assurance, habitat mitigation, etc.).

¹² Audio/Video for Agenda Item B = 00:47:18 Part 1-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Council Member Walton questioned whether this was the third extension request and what was the original completion deadline for the project.

Ms. Esterson confirmed the current request is the third extension request for the project. The original completion deadline was May 24, 2023 which was extended in Amendment 1 to 2026.

Council Member Walton questioned if the construction has started on the proposed split site.

Ms. Esterson provided the Northeast portion has no turbines built; East portion has 71 turbines built.

Vice Chair Beier questioned whether there are shared components, such as roads, already constructed.

Ms. Esterson stated there are some shared infrastructures in place.

Vice Chair Beier questioned whether Council should consider conditions addressing contractor/subcontractor compliance, given past issues with NextEra projects.

Ms. Esterson noted the concern and confirmed some safeguards already exist through current compliance conditions.

Council Member Devlin stated any future rulemaking on completion deadlines should include a robust exception process due to market, transmission, and supply challenges.

Chair Condon suggested the need for deeper discussion on construction deadline policy, especially considering long development timelines for major projects.

Secretary Cornett provided current rules only limit commencement deadline extensions, not completion deadlines; original rules didn't anticipate project splits creating multiple timeline tracks. He noted there are existing safeguards including expanded incident/non-compliance reporting and the ability to adjust decommissioning cost estimates if compliance issues increase project risk.

Chair Condon questioned how a parent company letter which states resources are provided supports compliance.

Ms. Esterson stated the letter is evidence in the record; conditions govern compliance, but the parent-company assurance supports the evaluation of organizational expertise.

Amendment Hearing

The hearing was opened at 9:40 AM by Presiding Officer Sarah Esterson. She outlined procedural steps and noted:

- Hearing is held in person and via Teams; is fully recorded.
- Public notice was issued July 2, initiating a comment period through July 31.
- Written comments must be submitted by 5:00 PM on July 31; none received to date.
- Required on-record statements regarding comment specificity and the enhanced comment evaluation process were presented.
- Instructions provided for submitting comments and the order of testimony.

Certificate Holder Comments

Representative Sarah Jaberi (NextEra Energy Resources subsidiary) stated:

- The amendment request includes splitting the certificate into two separate certificates (operational facility and build-out on private land).
- The amendment also seeks to modify the approved layout for the northeastern portion.
- The certificate holder will review and respond to all comments received.

Public Comment

Comments were provided by:

- **Irene Gilbert:**
 - Concern about outdated survey information from the original 2017 certificate.
 - Belief that a three-year construction deadline extension is not authorized under applicable OAR rules.
 - Emphasized need for adherence to extension limits and avoiding long delays.
- **Wendy King:**
 - Family received a map without a legend, making it unusable.
 - Requested clearer maps showing turbine locations and ownership divisions.
 - Expressed concern about potential new turbines in scenic Gleason areas.
- **Les Poole:**
 - Noted recurring issues with inadequate maps and materials in energy project processes.
 - Stressed that unclear maps hinder public understanding and Council decision-making.

Council Questions & Discussion

- Whether landowners received the same maps included in Council packets.
- Challenges navigating project maps without landmarks or legends.
- The need for improved map clarity and public tools (GIS, reference points).
- Clarification that exact turbine locations are not required at this stage due to micro-siting flexibility.

The certificate holder was invited to respond but declined. The public comment period remains open until July 31.

The hearing was closed at 10:05 AM on July 24, 2026.

C. Buckley Solar Facility Notice of Intent Extension Request (Action Item)¹³

Kathleen Sloan, Senior Siting Analyst

- Presented request to extend the NOI expiration date for the proposed Buckley Solar Facility.
- Explained that an NOI is a preliminary filing before an application and expires two years after submission unless extended.
- Buckley Solar LLC (subsidiary of Clenera) submitted the NOI on August 16, 2024, proposing a 1,200 MW solar PV facility with battery storage.
- Preliminary application was originally due August 17, 2026.
- On June 10, 2026, the applicant requested a one-year extension to August 17, 2027.

Project Background

- Original site boundary: ~7,800 acres (12 sq. miles) of EFU-zoned land in Sherman County between Tygh Valley and Grass Valley.
- Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) made changes to planning and siting the Buckley substation, causing delays that required redesign of the project layout and additional field surveys.
- Approximately 1,100 acres were removed from the project boundary due to these changes.
- Revised boundary does not increase analysis areas; adjustments documented in a draft amended project order.

Evaluation of Extension Request

- Extension request was timely (submitted 67 days before expiration).
- Department determined the request demonstrates good cause due to BPA-driven planning delays.
- Applicant committed to submitting the preliminary application within the one-year extension period.
- Department recommended approval of the extension.

Council Member Howe asked whether multiple extensions are allowed.

Ms. Sloan confirmed only one NOI extension is allowed; further delays require restarting the NOI process.

Council Member Howe motioned the Council find the petition timely and demonstrated good cause and approve a one-year extension to August 17, 2027.

¹³ Audio/Video for Agenda Item C = 01:35:20 Part 1-2026-07-24--EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Council Member Walton seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

D. Radioactive Material Transport Fee Rulemaking (Public Hearing)¹⁴ Tom Jackman, Rules Coordinator

Mr. Jackman, acting as Presiding Officer opened a public hearing on proposed updates to rules governing the transportation of radioactive materials in Oregon. The Council authorized the rulemaking in May 2026, and the notice was filed with the Secretary of State later that month. The proposed rules would update OAR 345-60 by:

- Increasing fees for most placarded truck shipments from 70 to 125 dollars and raising the annual permit cap from 500 to 750 dollars.
- Applying equivalent fees to rail shipments, which are currently exempt.
- Adding a higher fee for highway-route-controlled quantities such as high-level radioactive waste or spent nuclear fuel.
- Establishing a four-year review cycle for ongoing fee schedule assessment.

The Public Hearing was opened at 10:36 am.

There were no public comments received.

The Public Hearing was closed at 10:39 am.

E. Public Comments (Information Item)¹⁵

- **Irene Gilbert**
 - Expressed concerns about the Amendment Determination Request (ADR) process for Boardman-to-Hemingway (B2H).
 - Stated that changes to siting corridors should require a full amendment and are not exempt under applicable rules.
 - Referenced Supreme Court case SCS 071487, arguing the court requires amendments for changes within micro-siting corridors.
 - Believes current department approvals for corridor changes conflict with rules and court decisions.
 - Warned she may file concerns with the Supreme Court if changes continue without full amendment.
 - Raised due-process concerns: amendment decisions made without final orders prevent judicial review.

¹⁴ Audio/Video for Agenda Item D = 00:00:28 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

¹⁵ Audio/Video for Agenda Item E = 00:07:26 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

- Mentioned she has appealed dismissal of her previous challenge to the Oregon Supreme Court.
- **Todd Cornett (ODOE Secretary)**
 - Noted receipt of a public-comment email from Obsidian Renewables regarding Oregon Data Center Advisory Committee.
 - Added it to the Council's public record despite it appearing directed to a different body.
- **Wendy King**
 - Commented on impacts of B2H on the Myers Farm cultural resource.
 - Said archaeological findings were inconclusive and jurisdictional disputes (SHPO vs. BLM) prevent ODOE from enforcing compliance.
 - Expressed that their cultural resource is left vulnerable during construction.
 - Stated landowners cannot legally protect or collect artifacts without hiring archaeologists and obtaining expensive permits.
 - Felt ODOE's decision reflects preference for the utility rather than affected landowners.
- **Les Poole**
 - Raised concerns about inadequate maps in project applications statewide.
 - Noted recurring issues: missing key features, poor labeling, insufficient detail.
 - Recommended higher standards for maps and visual materials starting from the NOI stage.
 - Encouraged rulemaking or policy changes to ensure applicants provide clear, accurate depictions.
- **Chair Condon**
 - Acknowledged previous comments from Ms. Esterson regarding willingness to discuss map improvements.
 - Encouraged Mr. Poole to connect directly with staff for further discussion.
- **Council Member Denise Calderon**
 - Clarified that more detailed maps exist beyond those made public and stated that standards are met during project approval.
 - Noted some materials may not be publicly available due to confidentiality.
 - Encouraged Mr. Poole to reach out to staff for any map resources that can be shared.
- **Secretary Todd Cornett**
 - Explained that public-notice maps are intended as vicinity-level overviews and are not meant to show full project detail.
 - Acknowledged comments about clarity and stated improvements can be made.
 - Clarified that detailed maps are available in the Notice of Intent, full application exhibits, and online mapping tools.

- Emphasized staff can assist the public in accessing and navigating detailed mapping resources.

- **Les Poole**

- Reiterated concern that maps included in public notices are often inadequate, lacking clear labeling of highways, roads, and key geographic features.
- Stated that basic maps should be understandable to the public without requiring deeper navigation through extensive project files.
- Indicated he will follow up with staff on improving map clarity and standards.

F. Soil, Structural & Waste Minimization Standard Phase III Informal Rulemaking Initiation (Action Item)¹⁶

Tom Jackman, Rules Coordinator

- Introduced initiation of informal rulemaking for soil protection, structural standards, and waste minimization.
- Noted this is part of a multi-phase update to Council siting rules, following earlier phases focused on application structure and clarity.
- Stated goals: improve efficiency, remove duplicative or unused information requirements, and reduce frequent requests for additional applicant information.
- Explained bundling the three standards due to overlapping topics such as soils, site conditions, erosion, stormwater, spills, and construction impacts.
- Clarified that updates aim to improve clarity and administration, not reduce substantive protections.
- Described efforts to “modernize” rules to ensure requirements reflect current technologies (solar, wind, battery, etc.).
- Highlighted potential consolidation of recurring requirements into standard conditions where feasible.
- Outlined intent to form a Rulemaking Advisory Committee (RAC) with 11–15 members representing public, developers, tribes, resource groups, utilities, local governments, and agencies. • Reviewed difference between informal rulemaking (internal development, stakeholder drafting) and formal rulemaking (regulated notice, public comment, legislative notice).

Chair Condon asked for clarification regarding rule “modernization.” She also confirmed her understanding of the process for informal vs. formal rulemaking steps.

Council Member Devlin strongly supported initiating the rulemaking. He requested that RAC include members with practical waste-minimization experience, not solely advocates. He noted real-world recycling constraints: markets, processors, environmental impacts of transportation. He suggested planning for recyclability must begin at project design, not end-of-life.

¹⁶ Audio/Video for Agenda Item F = 00:36:58 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Secretary Todd Cornett explained need to update the waste-minimization standards due to new project types and future uncertainty regarding recyclability of renewable-energy components. He noted issues such as turbine repowering, solar panel life-cycles, lack of long-term data, and differences in recycling markets. He acknowledged complexity of grouping waste minimization with soil and structural standards but stated it fits best here. He further emphasized rulemaking must anticipate long-term needs and potential legislative interest.

Vice Chair Beier sought clarification on why waste minimization fits with soil and structural standards. She highlighted compliance issues with erosion and sediment control in past reports and encouraged alignment between rulemaking and compliance experience.

Council Member Walton urged maintaining or strengthening soil and structural safety requirements, especially for wind projects. He cited real incidents in previous professional experience involving turbine structural failure. He also emphasized the need for site-specific geotechnical considerations.

Council Member Calderon reminded Council that waste considerations also relate to nuclear, geothermal, hydrogen, and fusion energy. She encouraged rules that anticipate future technology and associated wastewater or waste materials. She further noted historical context regarding unregulated waste disposal practices.

Council Member Devlin motioned to initiate Phase 3 rulemaking for soil, structural, and waste minimization standards with staff-recommended scope and objectives and motion included approval of forming a RAC and delegating appointment authority to the department.

Council Walton seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously

G. Annual Process Improvement Plan (Information Item)¹⁷-Bibi Bartley, Operations and Policy Analyst provided an overview of the annual process improvement plan, focused on increasing efficiency and refining Siting Division workflows.

Vice Chair Beier

- Suggested forming a small public advisory group to test public-facing materials for clarity.
- Appreciated improvements to RAI tracking and encouraged continued streamlining.
- Noted the importance of upfront clarity to reduce back-and-forth with applicants.
- Thanked staff for handling complex workload and unexpected duties.

¹⁷ Audio/Video for Agenda Item G = 01:06:19 Part 2-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Secretary Todd Cornett

- Agreed public feedback is valuable and noted prior outreach during development of the public guide.
- Emphasized iterative improvements based on public comments—such as recent feedback on mapping clarity.
- Confirmed mapping standards could be improved and should be incorporated into process-improvement work.
- Acknowledged complexity of the program and reinforced commitment to continually refining tools and materials.
- Responded to Council request for a future budget update, confirming it will be included in next month's Secretary Report.

H. Biglow Canyon Wind Farm Appointment of a Representative to the Solar Agricultural Mitigation Advisory Committee (Action Item)¹⁸

Sarah Esteron, Senior Operations and Policy Analyst, provided an overview of the request for the appointment:

- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) issues a request for proposal for agriculture-beneficial projects.
- A selection committee reviews proposals and recommends projects to the Sherman County Board of Commissioners.
- Sherman County approves projects and funds are dispersed.
- Council must appoint one non-voting member to the selection committee. Recommended appointments are: Primary: Ernie Moore, fourth-generation dryland wheat farmer (Sherman/Morrow County); Alternate: Daisy Goebel, former Morrow County land-use planner with agricultural community experience.

Council Member Devlin expressed his support the recommended appointees. He questioned whether the Council later reviews how mitigation funds are actually spent and encouraged careful tracking as this mitigation model is new. He also raised concern that a one-time fund may not provide meaningful long-term agricultural benefit.

Ms. Esteron confirmed this is the first project of its kind to reach implementation. MCEDD, the certificate holder, and Sherman County must report progress to ODOE. ODOE will monitor reports and update the Council. The long-term outcomes remain unknown. She noted the model is being attempted in other counties but with mixed reception.

Vice Chair Beier asked whether county commissioners approve the mitigation agreement.

Ms. Esteron confirmed that was correct and added Sherman County is a signatory.

¹⁸ Audio/Video for Agenda Item H = 00:00:16 Part 3-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Chair Condon supported having both a primary and alternate appointee. She noted interest in revisiting the non-voting status of Council-appointed members in future cases.

Council Member Calderon questioned if the Council had used this mitigation-fund model before. She emphasized the need to confirm funds truly benefit agricultural communities.

Ms. Esterson provided the mitigation fund model has been used once previously in the Sunstone project, though that project was earlier in its timeline.

Council Member Howe motioned Council appoint Ernie Moore as the non-voting member and Daisy Goebel as the alternate to the Biglow Canyon Wind Farm Agricultural Mitigation Fund Advisory Committee.

Council Member Walton seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

I. Oregon Trail Solar Amendment 2 – Request to Waive In-Vicinity Public Hearing (Action Item)¹⁹Todd Cornett, Council Secretary explained that the department (not the certificate holder) is requesting to waive the in-vicinity public hearing for an amendment to the Oregon Trail Solar project in Gilliam County. He reviewed the project details and noted the amendment request involves administrative changes only.

Council Member Walton supported the waiver, noting the amendment only splits the project and does not change project impacts. He mentioned concern that hosting an in-vicinity hearing solely to discuss unrelated projects could mislead the public.

Vice Chair Beier Expressed being “torn”:

- *Understands logistical challenges of in-vicinity hearings.*
- *Noted battery-storage projects often generate public concern.*
- *Highlighted value of being physically present in communities affected by multiple EFSC projects.*

Chair Condon opposed the waiver. She emphasized the importance of meeting communities in person, hearing direct public feedback, and maintaining EFSC visibility across rural Oregon. She Also noted that in-vicinity hearings often generate valuable public comment on other nearby projects.

Secretary Cornett acknowledged Council’s concerns and reiterated flexibility to pair in-vicinity hearings with site visits to increase value. He further noted future meeting locations may naturally place the Council near this project regardless of decision.

¹⁹ Audio/Video for Agenda Item I = 00:14:34 Part 3-2026-06-25-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

Council Member Howe motioned that Council waive the in-vicinity public hearing.

Council Member Walton seconded the motion.

The motion was carried by a 4-2 vote. The in-vicinity hearing requirement is waived.

Vice Chair Beier suggested scheduling regular Council meetings in the Gorge or Eastern Oregon to maintain public accessibility and allow site visits.

Secretary Cornett agreed and noted statutes encourage rotating meeting locations statewide.

Council Member Devlin proposed conducting site visits at facilities with repeated compliance issues (“frequent fliers”) to better understand real-world conditions.

Chair Condon reinforced the value of in-person engagement through strategic meeting locations is beyond formal hearing requirements.

J. Executive Order 25-29 – Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Advancing Oregon’s Clean Energy Future (Information Item & Possible Action Item)²⁰-Assistant Director Todd Cornett and Senior Policy Analyst Joni Sliger presented follow-up summaries of ODOE’s draft reports and analysis discussed at the prior Council meeting.

Topics Presented

- EFSC Siting Program Review
- Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment
- Executive Order 25-29 Reporting Requirements
- Opportunities for Council Input before final submission

Secretary Cornett summarized key findings from the draft *Streamlining Clean Energy Siting Report*, highlighting:

Core Themes

- Historical context of EFSC’s consolidated review structure.
- Importance of thorough, data-driven review processes.
- Large scale of modern renewable projects and environmental considerations.
- Key timeline benchmarks showing where delays occur.

Major Timeline Insights

- NOI → Application submission: Avg. 375 days

²⁰ Audio/Video for Agenda Item J = 00:37:34 Part 3-2026-07-24-EFSC-Meeting-Audio/Video

- Application completeness review: Avg. 303 days
- Complete → Final Order (no contested case): 187 days
- Complete → Final Order (with contested case): 795 days
- Construction after approval (for projects that build): Avg. 3.5 years

Drivers Behind Delays

- Developers submitting incomplete or insufficient data (e.g., missing seasonal surveys).
- Complexity of coordinating reviews with multiple agencies and tribal governments.
- Increasing project size and technological complexity.
- Interconnection limitations and market uncertainty.

Future Focus Areas Highlighted

- Streamlining the contested case step.
- Enhancing clarity and consistency in application requirements.
- Using artificial intelligence to aid staff with labor-intensive tasks such as sorting public comments.
- Evaluating staff structure and resource needs to ensure long-term capacity.
- Improving public-facing tools and communication.
- Increasing alignment with federal, state, and local review processes.
- Advancing Phase 3 rulemaking to refine standards and requirements.

Secretary Cornett also noted EFSC's history in reviewing transmission projects, with only six transmission projects having ever applied to EFSC, with just two moving forward to construction.

Reducing Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment

Ms. Sliger presented the companion report examining why many approved renewable energy projects do not advance into construction.

Key Barriers Identified

- High capital costs and financing constraints.
- Federal permitting delays and interagency coordination challenges.
- Equipment availability and global supply chain limitations.
- Workforce shortages impacting construction timelines.
- Interconnection queue congestion and limited grid capacity.

Recommended Actions

- Encourage voluntary reporting of planned withdrawals from interconnection queues to reduce cascading delays.
- Host statewide cross-agency energy siting forums to improve coordination and information sharing.
- Utilize new market data (such as day-ahead markets) for future analysis of grid and interconnection dynamics.

- Assess barriers for smaller (<20 MW) clean energy projects, including rooftop solar, floating solar, small hydro, and biomass.

Ms. Sliger emphasized that interconnection reform is largely governed by BPA, PacifiCorp, and FERC—not EFSC—and that many barriers lie outside state control.

Council Questions and Themes Raised

- How EFSC can better communicate project timelines and public notification.
- Impacts of wildfire risk, interconnection constraints, and shifting federal energy policies.
- Interest in future briefings on BPA processes, day-ahead markets, and grid limitations.
- Importance of maintaining strong public participation while exploring streamlining.

Council Member Walton warned against prioritizing streamlining over environmental and community protections and noted EFSC's responsibility to safeguard Oregon's landscapes and future generations.

Vice Chair Beier highlighted the reliance on other state and federal agencies as a major driver of delays and emphasized need for improved interagency cooperation.

Council Member Devlin discussed national policy shifts impacting investment decisions and described structural challenges in modernizing transmission infrastructure.

Council Member Calderon expressed support for Executive Order 25-29 goals and suggested exploring incentive-based approaches to improve information sharing by developers.

Council directed Secretary Cornett to summarize their thoughts for further discussion during the Council Secretary report during the August meeting for possible inclusion in the final Siting Report.

Chair Condon adjourned the meeting at 2:18 pm