



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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## Energy Advisory Work Group

DATE: April 7, 2026

TIME: 1:00 – 3:00PM

Oregon Department of Energy – via MS Teams

Meeting Attendees		
EAWG Members	ODOE Staff	Guests
Alessandra de la Torre, NW Energy Coalition Annette Price, Pacific Power Bridget Callahan, Sustainable Northwest Bryan Adams, CoEnergy Propane Greg Alderson, Portland General Electric Jana Gastellum, Oregon Environmental Council Jennifer Hill-Hart, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (alternate for Bob Jenks) Kerry Meade, NW Energy Efficiency Council Kyle Roadman, Emerald People's Utility District Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch, Community Action Partnership of Oregon Lisa Gaines, Oregon State University Mary Moerlins, NW Natural Nicole Hughes, Renewable Northwest Sarah Buchwalter, Portland General Electric (alternate for Greg Alderson) Silvia Tanner, Multnomah County Tony Schacher, Salem Electric Wade Carey, Monmouth Power & Light	Janine Benner, Director Alan Zelenka, Asst Director Planning & Innovation Blake Shelide, Codes & Standards Manager Christy Splitt, Government Relations Coordinator Danae Hammitt, Finance & Operations Manager Jessica Reichers, Technology & Policy Manager Linda Bures, Chief Operating and People Officer Majed Harfouche, Auditor Ruchi Sadhir, Assoc Director, Strategic Engagement Stacey Heuberger, Office Operations Analyst	Alec Shebiel Angela Crowley-Koch, OSSIA (alternative for Nicole Hughes) Ben Brint (alternate for Jana Gastellum) Chelsi Sparti Danelle Romain Dylan Brainard Fatima Falcon Greg Miller Jennifer Joly Jennifer Sulcer Jessie Kochaver Jordan Bice Katherine Morrison Lauren Link Lisa McGarity Mike Freese Miller Travis Natalia Ojeda Natasha Jackson Tucker Billman Zac Johnson

### Welcome and Director's Update (*Janine Benner, Director*)

- ODOE announced the selection of 24 recipients to receive Community Renewable Energy Grant Program grants. This is the fourth round of grant funding for the program.
- ODOE awarded over \$800,000 in General Fund incentives to support early planning for Oregon Building Performance Standard (BPS) compliance.

- Applications for a new federally funded BPS Early Compliance Program are also being accepted until April 10.
- At its March 20 meeting, the Energy Facility Siting Council approved the Biglow Canyon Wind project amendment to add solar to that facility.
- ODOE is actively working on about half of the 42 actions identified in the Oregon Energy Strategy. This includes working with University of Oregon's Institute of Policy Research and Engagement on data collection to inform an Oregon Workforce Needs study, and a student capstone project with Oregon State University to look at existing community benefit frameworks across different organizations and governments to help inform a framework that the state can use.
- ODOE is advancing actions under EO 25-29, including reports to recommend ways to reduce barriers to clean energy, expand transmission, streamline permitting and siting, and evaluate emerging technologies. ODOE is also exploring public-private partnerships to address gaps in clean energy deployment. EAWG members can follow up directly with [Mary Kopriva](#), or any ODOE staff, with ideas for PPPs.
- Energy Strategy and EO implementation updates can be found on [ODOE's website](#).
- ODOE is currently seeking public comments on draft measures and scenarios for the TIGHGER 2.0 project, which aims to help the state close the gap between the projected greenhouse gas emission reductions current policy and programs are expected to achieve and the state's 2035 and 2050 goals. After reviewing feedback, ODOE will estimate the emissions-reduction potential of each action and release a report this summer offering options for decisionmakers to consider.
- ODOE and the Oregon Climate Action Commission were tasked with establishing a net carbon sequestration goal for Oregon's natural and working lands. This goal is separate from the energy sector goal and focuses on emissions and carbon storage from things like vegetation and soil. ODOE is supporting a committee created by the Commission to develop this goal, and the Commission plans to discuss and approve it at a meeting this summer.
- Janine highlighted two of [ODOE's Grounded podcasts](#) that may be of interest to members, one on geothermal energy and one on EVs in rural Oregon.

***Questions and feedback:***

Janine clarified for Nicole Hughes that the actions identified in the TIGHGER 2.0 project will be released to the public. The [Oregon Climate Action Commission](#) is the best place to follow the progress of TIGHGER 2.0, as well as the land-based carbon goals.

**EAWG Roundtable**

Tony Schacher – Salem Electric

- Operations are in a relatively calm period between summer construction and winter storm season.
- Salem Electric purchased property in the Keizer area to use as an additional warehouse for improved resiliency after the 2021 ice storm revealed access issues when bridges were closed.

- Working on several downtown Salem system improvement projects, including reconductoring.
- Continuing to stay ready for mutual aid needs during storm and fire seasons.

#### Bryan Adams – CoEnergy Propane

- Converting 18 diesel generators in Idaho to propane, reducing greenhouse gases by about 20% and testing renewable propane as the feedstock for the project.
- Running a pilot with Illinois Tech and the Propane Education & Research Council on carbon capture that converts captured carbon into propane. Each unit is expected to produce about 4 gallons/day, continuously.
- CoEnergy will soon incorporate renewable propane derived from the plant-based crop camelina, processed in Bakersfield, into its supply mix for the first time. The camelina-based supply does not compete with food crops and is considered a complementary agricultural product.

#### Annette Price – Pacific Power

- Preparing for wildfire season. May is Wildfire Awareness Month and they have been hosting statewide webinars, open houses, and outreach to tribal communities that will continue through next month.
- The asset and service-area transaction in Washington between Pacific Power and Portland General Electric is underway and in regulatory review, expected to take around 12 months.
- Entered nonbinding agreements with three Oregon co-ops to explore distribution asset discussions.
- Beginning to plan for issues expected in the 2027 legislative session.
- Two new senior government affairs representatives, Natasha Jackson and Katie Morrison, have joined the team.

#### Lisa Gaines – Institute for Natural Resources, OSU & PSU

- Launching a water workforce assessment this summer and have begun coordinating with the energy workforce assessment to align efforts where possible.
- Hiring four students from different universities to conduct interviews and surveys to understand water-sector job needs and provide findings that may also complement the energy assessment.
- Another OSU group is working on a blue economy workforce assessment related to marine and coastal jobs. Potential synergies may also exist with energy topics such as wave energy.

#### Wade Carey – Monmouth Power & Light

- In the middle of budget season.
- Planning to build a new substation in four years.
- Meeting with a local Climate Action Advisory Group made up of Monmouth and Independence residents.
- Asked ODOE for support in arranging a meeting with the Governor’s Office to discuss utility concerns about rising costs tied to litigation and the Judge Simon decision.

Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch – Community Action Partnership of Oregon

- Involved in several PUC dockets focused on affordability and issues affecting low-income households.
- Working through state planning and rulemaking processes tied to the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department.
- Increasing focus on partnerships with COUs, especially with possible shifts in distribution asset responsibilities.
- Strengthening internal alignment between workforce development/weatherization training and policy work.

Mary Moerlins – NW Natural

- Preparing internally for the 2027 legislative session and tracking multiple ongoing initiatives, including TIGHGER 2.0 and discussions about data centers.
- In year two of the Climate Protection Program compliance period. Securing renewable natural gas and additional energy efficiency resources while waiting for more compliance options to become available.
- Hearing significant customer and public feedback about the Climate Protection Program.
- Awaiting PUC feedback on IRP action plan items, which will guide upcoming pilots and investments focused on carbon reduction.
- Customer affordability remains a major priority. All affordability related programs have been consolidated under her team to improve access and coordination.

Kyle Roadman, Emerald People’s Utility District

- Decommissioning the Short Mountain landfill gas power plant and transitioning it into a renewable natural gas facility through a third-party contractor, Waga Energy.
- Coordinating with the county and NW Natural on pipeline interconnection.
- Major capital work under way, including receipt of a new substation transformer.
- Beginning a new strategic planning phase with strong emphasis on energy efficiency.
- Recently awarded a weatherization grant that will support more than 100 homes in the service territory.

Nicole Hughes, Renewable Northwest

- Planning for upcoming sessions in the four states RNW serves.
- Beginning a strategic planning process that will span the next few months and will involve outreach to partners for input.

Jana Gastellum – Oregon Environmental Council

- Monitoring global events impacting energy prices.
- Appreciates Oregon’s leadership in fuel diversification and renewable energy programs such as the Clean Fuels Program and noted clean energy markets are helping diversify Oregon’s energy system and create opportunities for utilities and consumers.
- Highlighted statewide drought declarations, low snowpack, and potential hydropower volatility and emphasized the need for strong climate commitments and

is interested in best practices around energy use, demand response, and flexibility for large load customers.

- Tracking wildfire impacts and climate related budget pressures.
- Helping host a Clean Grid Summit on May 18 in Salem.
- Also working on transportation sector issues, which remain underinvested and require continued legislative attention.

#### Kerry Meade – Building Potential / Smart Building Center

- Tracking policies tied to economic development and customer energy costs.
- Focusing on addressing rate pressure and the role of buildings in supporting grid reliability and decarbonization.
- Advocating for behind the meter solutions, virtual power plants, and customer-controlled energy flexibility.
- Developing the agenda for the Smart Buildings Exchange (SBX) Fall conference in November and continuing the Smart Buildings Exchange Plus virtual webinar series.
- Expanded building performance help desk and now providing statewide benchmarking support in Washington, with plans for Oregon support as well.
- Exploring deeper training opportunities for school and community building operators, particularly around wildfire smoke and indoor air quality.

#### Greg Alderson – Portland General Electric

- Preparing for wildfire season with open houses and extensive community outreach.
- Completed regulatory filings in Oregon and Washington related to the Washington acquisition.
- Received final approval from EFSC for the Biglow solar facility.
- Continuing work tied to TIGHGER projects and executive order implementation.
- Announced agreements for two solar + battery hybrid projects totaling ~600 MW and those are expected to be online by the end of 2027.
- Executed two Purchase Power Agreements totaling ~400 MW of standalone battery resources.
- Submitted 2025 RFP shortlist to the PUC, covering ~4,800 MW of solar, wind, battery, and hybrid projects, targeting online dates of 2030 or earlier.

#### Bridget Callahan – Sustainable Northwest

- Sustainable Northwest provides year-round technical assistance to help communities plan and build clean energy projects, especially through their expanded Community Energy Development Assistance program and welcomed inquiries from members when needed.
- Involved in implementing microgrid legislation, HB 2065 & HB 2066, and participating in related PUC processes.
- Tracking the Governor’s Data Center Advisory Committee and assessing data-center impacts and opportunities for rural communities.

#### Alessandra de la Torre – Northwest Energy Coalition

- Focused on affordability, a just clean energy transition, wildfire issues, flexible load, emergency preparedness, and public health and safety.

- Tracking the Governor’s executive orders, Data Center Advisory Committee, the 9th Northwest Power Plan, Fair Act implementation, utility service territory changes, and PGE/PacifiCorp IRPs and clean energy plans.
- Helped release the Montana Regional Transmission Connectivity Study exploring pathways for up to 12,000 MW of energy from Montana to the grid by 2035.
- NWECC is hosting the Northwest Transmission Summit on May 7–8 in Boise, ID.
- NWECC is a co-plaintiff challenging BPA Markets+ day ahead market decision, with a ruling expected later this year.
- Working on wildfire mitigation plan reviews and ensuring cost effective, equitable risk reduction investments.
- Running an energy justice leadership program to help community members learn about energy justice and how to engage with the PUC.

Jennifer Hill-Hart – Oregon Citizens Utility Board

- Working on a couple of gas rate cases.
- Working on implementation of several 2025 laws, including HB 3179 (Fair Act).
- Designing winter moratorium structure and related rate adjustments.
- Developing and transitioning to multi-year rate plans.
- Beginning preliminary work for the 2027 legislative session.

**Legislative Session Debrief** (*Christy Splitt, Government Relations Coordinator*)

- Although several bills could have created new programs or tasks for ODOE, no new programs were assigned in the end.
- ODOE received permission to spend previously allocated funds for three incentive programs:
  - [Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program](#) – reopening first, as soon as possible.
  - [Oregon Rental Home Heat Pump Program](#) – reopening later in the biennium.
  - [Community Heat Pump Deployment Program](#) – these funds are distributed through regional administrators and ODOE is confirming whether partners can put the remaining dollars to use.
- The legislature withdrew \$1.2 million of general funds from ODOE for the state match to the federal Grid Resilience Program; ODOE working with the legislature and Governor’s office to ensure we have the necessary funding to meet the state match requirements .
- Christy highlighted two siting related bills that will affect ODOE:
  - HB 4076 – allows IRA tax credit-eligible projects to choose state or county permitting regardless of project size.
  - HB 4031 – allows specific land use exceptions related to surplus generation capacity.
- Additional bills (HB 4020, 4021, 4084) direct permitting agencies, including ODOE, to:
  - Develop a new key performance measure related to permitting timelines.
  - Participate in the new Joint Permitting Council.
  - Provide information and ideas for expediting permitting processes (similar to work already underway for Executive Order 25-29).
- ODOE supported HB 4029, a solar industry consumer protection bill, and will work with approved contractors to ensure awareness and compliance with new requirements.

- Christy shared a [list of issues](#) that were left unresolved this session that could potentially come back. She asked members what issues they anticipate coming up in the next legislative session.

**Questions and feedback:**

Jana Gastellum flagged transmission as a stand-alone topic that could be added to Christy's list, as well as infrastructure upgrades, and funding for climate impact costs.

Jennifer Joly asked in the chat if ODOE will be taking any of the topics listed and submitting agency request bills. Christy said that is not likely, with siting for energy projects as a possible exception.

Christy shared ODOE's more comprehensive [2026 Legislative Session Report](#) in the chat.

**Strategic Plan** (*Ruchi Sadhir, Associate Director for Strategic Engagement*)

- Ruchi shared ODOE's near-final Strategic Plan and highlighted the small changes from the version EAWG members reviewed at the January meeting.
- Two action items were added to Pillar 4 – Aligned, Well Supported People and Organizations: one action is to address how advanced technologies like AI can help streamline work to be more efficient while also considering impacts and risks, and another action to foster a culture of continuous professional growth.

**Questions and feedback:**

Referring to Pillar 3, Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch asked if ODOE is thinking about cross-agency collaboration and clarifying roles. Ruchi said cross-agency conversations are happening but identifying shared goals and roles could be more structured. External partners often see collaboration opportunities that agencies miss and Ruchi said she would welcome suggestions to help agencies be better aligned.

Wade Carey noted in the chat that Pillar 1 Goal 1 speaks to prioritizing and aligning resources that support ODOE's role in implementing the Oregon Energy Strategy and advancing its five energy pathways. COUs see the Energy Strategy as too focused on electrification and clean energy, and that the State should be taking a more comprehensive approach that weighs affordability and reliability equally, and that is why they are so concerned about threats to hydropower operations. Janine said that while clean energy and electrification come up a lot in conversations, those are only two of the five pathways that ODOE is pursuing. Ruchi added that affordability and reliability were included in the modeling, and hydropower is included in the Strategy.

**2027-2029 Budget Preparation** (*Janine Benner*)

- Janine introduced Linda Bures, Chief Operations and People Officer, and Danae Hammitt, Finance and Operations Manager, who will be overseeing ODOE's budget development process. A new Budget Services Manager will also be joining the agency next week.

- The 2027–29 budget is expected to be constrained. Agencies are preparing budgets under the assumption that no new revenue will be available to expand or propose new programs.
- Agencies have been directed by the Governor’s Office to prioritize mission critical activities and work supporting executive orders, affordability, economic prosperity, and protecting Oregon values.
- Budget submissions must be revenue neutral, and ODOE will not be proposing any Policy Options Packages (POPs) or legislative concepts (LC) that raise fees or increase ESA.
- Rising operational costs will still require additional revenue to maintain Current Service Level, but it will not be for new programs or FTE that will increase costs.
- ODOE’s 2027-29 base budget was prepared by taking the Legislatively Approved Budget finalized at the close of the 2026 legislative session and applying automatic COLA and merit step increases.
- ODOE, along with all state agencies, will apply pre-determined adjustments for inflation, program phase-outs/phase-ins, and technical updates to their base budget to produce the Current Service Level (CSL) by the end of May.
- Policy Option Packages (POPs) will be added to the CSL to form the Agency Request Budget (ARB). ODOE’s ARB is due to the Governor by July 31.
- ODOE will hold two budget meetings this summer: one in June to review CSL estimates and POPs, followed by a public meeting in July to present final numbers and ESA needs.
- Janine shared ODOE’s ideas for POPs and legislative concepts:
  - LC - Technical fix: Update statutory language so ODOE can continue accessing required federal criminal history data for employee background checks.
  - LC - Statutory adjustments to incentive programs: Increase the Community Renewable Energy Grant Program’s (C-REP) administrative cap from 10% to 15% to cover long-term- grant management needs. Extend C-REP planning grants to 12 months, and also allow flexible prioritization of project types, and limit the number of active grants per entity. Extend the Oregon Solar + Storage Rebate Program sunset date to January 2031 to allow low- and moderate-income projects time to complete.
  - LC - Sensitive data protection: Expand existing public records exemptions and authorize data sharing agreements so ODOE can better protect confidential or security sensitive information.
  - LC - Appliance standards backstop: Amend statute to automatically adopt current federal efficiency standards as Oregon state standards if they are rolled back at the national level.
  - LC – Agency report deadline optimization: Adjust statutory report deadlines to create a more strategic, coordinated schedule that supports quality and cadence.
  - LC – Executive Order placeholders: Reserve space for potential legislative proposals that may emerge.
  - POP – Incentive programs remaining funds rollover: Carry forward any unspent incentive program funds so ODOE has spending authority for them next biennium.

- POP – Siting Compliance Officer: Add a compliance officer in the Siting division to reduce consultant costs and better manage increasing compliance workload, while attempting to keep the request revenue neutral for all fund types.
- POP Grid Resilience state match: Restore and secure state matching funds needed to fully access federal Grid Resilience Grant dollars after the Legislature rescinded \$1.2 million in the 2025-27 budget. This will have a General Fund cost so ODOE is working with the Governor’s Office to decide an appropriate path.
- The Governor’s Office has asked agencies to note in their Agency Request Budget any additional priorities they’d like to pursue if future General Fund dollars were to become available.

**Questions and feedback:**

Jana Gastellum and Silvia Tanner expressed appreciation for ODOE’s efforts to be good stewards of resources.

**Biennial Energy Report Update** (*Jessica Reichers, Technology & Policy Manager*)

- ODOE is developing a new interactive online version of Energy by the Numbers, allowing users to explore data through clickable charts and tables.
- ODOE is also exploring an AI-powered “BER bot” trained solely on past and current Biennial Energy Reports to help users find information more easily.
- The bot and online tools may launch alongside the written report due on November 1, but technical or budget issues could extend their release timeline.
- To improve accessibility, the team is restructuring Energy 101s and Technology Reviews to be shorter, more focused, and easier for newcomers to understand.
- Technology Reviews will include updated existing topics and a new set of emerging technologies, as directed by Executive Order 25-29 and aligned with the Oregon Energy Strategy.
- Upcoming Energy 101 topics include foundational information on utilities, industrial symbiosis, permitting, electricity reliability, end of life management for renewable energy equipment, and federal policy impacts.
- Additional new pieces are being scoped on sustainable aviation fuel and barriers to medium- and heavy-duty vehicle electrification.
- The team is also developing policy briefs, including one focused on data centers and energy use.
- Jessica asked members if they had suggestions for topics that they would like to see in this version of the BER.

**Questions and feedback:**

Wade Carey emphasized the importance of covering each topic fully, from what it is, to how it’s implemented, to the real world impacts after implementation.

Silvia Tanner suggested adding large loads to the Energy 101 subject list.

Bryan Adams suggested reviewing assumptions from past Energy 101 materials and earlier Biennial Energy Reports, updating those assumptions, and reflecting current industry status and upcoming technology developments.

**Closing Comments/Q&A**

- None.