Oregon Governor's Data Center Advisory Committee (DCAC)

Session 3: Data Centers and Land Use Issues
April 24, 2026 – Facilitator Summary

The following Facilitator's Summary is intended to capture general discussion, reflections, concerns, and insights shared at the Data Center Advisory Committee's public session. This summary also indicates actions or issues that the DCAC may need to discuss at upcoming sessions. This summary is not a transcript of the session. For more details on the DCAC's work, and to view this session's agenda, presentations, and recording, please visit the ODOE's DCAC website.

Welcome and Introduction to the Process and People

Facilitator, **Donna Silverberg**, opened the session and welcomed the Data Center Advisory Committee (DCAC), speakers, and session attendees. She noted that the LAND USE agenda-committee designed Session 3 with curated expert panelists to discuss key land use issues and perspectives to aid the DCAC's focus on:

- Encouraging data center siting decisions that support responsible economic development, create jobs, and increase long-term revenue that will strengthen our rural communities;
- Understanding how the development of data centers affects and can help Oregon meet its climate, clean energy, and natural resource management goals; and
- Identifying key issue areas to address when developing a policy framework to help guide the state in the responsible siting of data centers moving forward.

Donna reminded everyone of the DCAC's meeting topics, highlighting today's topic: Data Centers and Land Use in Oregon. She reviewed the session agenda and presentations which were meant to focus on state actions/interests, local government case studies, and Oregon voices about data centers and land use considerations. She emphasized that these meetings are intended to be a "data center university" atmosphere to provide expert information and engaged discussion with DCAC members, a group of citizen volunteers, to help them shape their recommendations to the Governor.

DCAC Co-chair **Michael Jung**, emphasized the uniqueness of Oregon's lands, recognizing that the topic of land use is very important to those living in the state. Co-Chair, **Margaret Hoffmann** added that she hoped the session structure would allow for robust conversation amongst the DCAC and invited land use experts. DCAC members and support staff introduced themselves following the Co-Chairs' remarks.

Data Centers and Oregon's Land Use System

The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) was asked to provide the DCAC with an overview of Oregon's unique land use system, with insights into the following questions:

- What is Oregon's system and how do data centers fit into it?

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- Where do data centers fit into Oregon's Land Use Goals?
- What is the current data center land use activity in Oregon (e.g., trends, processes)?
- How does DLCD interact with data centers and land use decisions?
- What else should the DCAC know about Oregon's land use system?

Overview: DLCD Director, **Brenda Bateman**, introduced DLCD as Oregon's statewide land use planning agency, helping local governments plan and manage land use under Oregon's statewide planning goals. DLCD works to protect farm, forest, and other working lands and support orderly growth and development. She framed Oregon's land use system as a Planned-Growth model built around 19 statewide planning goals. For today's topic, she focused the DCAC on Goal 1 (Community Involvement) and Goal 2 (Land Use Planning / Comprehensive Planning). She emphasized that Oregon's model is designed to conserve working lands while allowing growth through local planning within a statewide framework.

Director Bateman noted that Oregon's land use system is unique: the state sets the goal-based framework, while cities and counties make local planning decisions. Communities can participate early and publicly in decisions about whether and how growth happens. Local governments' Comprehensive Plans help create certainty, especially when local governments "show their homework" and rely on an adequate factual basis when they plan for land use changes.

Brenda tasked the DCAC with considering three core questions about data centers:

1. Whether their continued growth makes sense in Oregon?
2. If so, where should they locate? and
3. How should they be developed and operated in Oregon's future?

Director Bateman urged the DCAC to consider benefits, externalities, and who benefits for how long, especially around land, water, climate, and local community impacts. She also suggested that the DCAC consider how data center growth aligns with Oregon's broader priorities like housing, climate resilience, economic prosperity, mental health, and education, and whether the industry's expansion truly moves those goals forward. DLCD can help local governments by providing technical assistance, data, and coordination, but there is not currently a centralized statewide "toolkit" for negotiating 'community benefits' from data center development.

Jon Jinings, Community Services Specialist at DLCD, explained how Oregon's comprehensive planning system works in practice: The permitting system is meant to proactively help communities plan for what they want, rather than just react to proposals that come in. He noted that cities must maintain a standing 20-year inventory of buildable land for industrial, commercial, and residential uses, so they don't run out of available land. DLCD functions as a support role to help communities through funding, technical assistance, and economic development planning support.

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Leigh McIlvaine, Economic Development Specialist at DLCD, presented on Oregon's land use system at it applies to data centers. She highlighted a trend of rapid increase in data center buildings from 8 in 2000 to 123 by 2025. Growth is happening in major clusters in the Portland metro/Hillsboro area, Central Oregon (Prineville/Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook counties), and especially the Umatilla Basin/Morrow County region. Leigh noted that, as a planned-growth state, DLCD sets the framework and local governments implement it through comprehensive planning and Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) meant to focus growth within the UGB. Oregon's land use system is meant to proactively predict growth and data centers create a challenge in that their rapid growth has been unpredicted.

Data centers may be appropriate under Goal 9 (Economic Development) if a local government has the right industrial land and locational factors. About 80% of data centers are inside UGBs and about 20% are on rural industrial lands. Leigh described how cities pursue economic opportunities analyses and UGB expansions when they need more land for data centers, and how those changes must be acknowledged by the state. Morrow County and Hillsboro are contrasting examples of rural and urban data center development patterns. DLCD currently has inquiries representing over 9,000 acres of new data center development, with 6,500 acres needing UGB expansion or rural up-zoning. Data centers represented about two-thirds of all new industrial land brought into UGBs in Oregon. From DLCD's perspective, the state needs more funding and tools to track growth, analyze impacts, and support local governments.

In concluding, Leigh highlighted the specific siting needs for hyperscale data center facilities, including large flat parcels, light industrial zoning, and access to transmission, power, and fiber. She noted that data center growth is creating major cumulative impacts with which Oregon's current systems are trying to adapt.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: How does the state help local governments with community benefits or contracting?**
    - **A**: Brenda noted DLCD does not have a robust toolkit or centralized program for negotiating community benefits. Leigh added that state agencies sometimes help, and Business Oregon can be involved. However, there is no true "one-stop" shop. Jon noted DLCD can act as a conduit to other agencies and the Governor's Regional Solutions program can help coordinate support.
- **Q: What does it mean for the state to help communities "follow through" on their commitments?**
    - **A**: Brenda noted that local comprehensive plans are public commitments. DLCD acts as the repository of those plans. If a city or county wants to change course, it must do so publicly and let the community weigh in again.

- **Q: How does Oregon's planning model compare with a more environmental-review-based model like California's?**
  - **A**: Oregon's model is the planned-growth approach: the state and local governments pre-plan where growth should happen rather than reviewing every project from scratch; this has helped preserve Oregon's rural/urban pattern and create certainty.
- **Q: Is there a "one-stop" state assistance process for private sector developers?**
  - **A**: No, not specifically. DLCD serves as a conduit to other agencies, but assistance is still spread across agencies.
- **Q: What is the power of a comprehensive plan?**
  - **A**: A comprehensive plan is a public statement of a community's future vision. Once adopted, it helps keep the community on track and gives the state a basis for review.
- **Q: How often do exceptions to the land use system happen?**
  - **A**: Exceptions do happen, but not every request for an exception is needed. DLCD offered to provide more detail on this question at a later time.
- **Q: How many data centers are on high-value agricultural land?**
  - **A**: DLCD doesn't have the number yet but could do that analysis if it helps DCAC.
- **Q: Do data centers require a Goal 9 Exception?**
  - **A**: Not necessarily. If a city has appropriate industrial land and locational factors, data centers can fit under Goal 9 without an exception.
- **Q: What is the difference between rural up-zoning and a UGB expansion?**
  - **A**: A rural up-zone stays in county jurisdiction and allows industrial development; it is an 'exception pathway'. A UGB expansion moves land into city planning jurisdiction.

How do Local Governments Interact with and Shape Data Center Land Development?
Case studies from Morrow County and the City of Hillsboro provided rural and urban lessons-learned when siting data centers, answering the following questions:

- How have siting decisions been made at the local level?
- What worked well, and what can work better or differently?
- What might help other local governments and their affected communities in the future? Is there a role for state government to assist?

Rural Perspective: **Tamra Mabbott**, Planning Director for Morrow County (MC), presented how a county with major data center development can manage land use, permitting, and cumulative impacts. Morrow County's data center footprint includes 10 data center campuses, with about 929 acres of approved campuses; most are outside Boardman's UGB. She emphasized that the current campuses are on land already zoned for industrial use, dating back to 1973, Oregon's acknowledged comprehensive planning under Senate Bill 100. She described a 1,260-acre rezone and "land swap" process where farmland was

rezoned from Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) to industrial for an "exascale" data center overlay zone, while other land was downzoned to offset it. Converting farmland to industrial required a Goal 3 exception, with the burden on the applicant to justify its need.

Data centers in existing industrial zones are handled as land use decisions rather than conditional uses in Morrow County, meaning they are standards-based and generally approved if criteria are met. Tamra noted that Oregon's process isn't really "one-stop", but pre-application meetings bring together local, state, and federal agencies so permitting requirements can be identified early. She highlighted major construction, traffic, substation and transmission line impacts, and the fact that those related facilities are reviewed separately from the data center campus itself. She noted that the industry is changing the county's character and driving speculation, because land rezoned for data centers can see huge value jumps. The county is only beginning to think about what happens to these large campuses in 5 to 10 years if the technology changes or sites become obsolete.

From Morrow County's perspective, they have accommodated data centers through careful industrial zoning and a rigorous land use process. However, the scale and pace of development are creating new concerns around infrastructure, traffic, speculation, and long-term land use planning. Tamra encouraged the DCAC and members of the public to visit Morrow County Planning Department's website and view the interactive Morrow County Energy Explorer for more information.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: What exactly is an exascale data center?**
  - **A**: It means "big" in practical terms! Tamra described the Morrow County exascale overlay as allowing a campus about four times larger than a typical large campus.
- **Q: Is the exascale overlay property or the data center itself being defined?**
  - **A**: The term refers to the data center use, not just the property.
- **Q: What is the land swap / rezone process mentioned during the presentation?**
  - **A**: Tamara explained that a private landowner sought a rezone from EFU to industrial and paired it with a downzone of other industrial land (that carried a "space age industrial" overlay), creating a swap-like result.
- **Q: Does that land swap affect high-value farmland?**
  - **A**: No, the rezonings affected land with low-quality soils, not high-value farmland.
- **Q: What happens to construction traffic and off-site impacts?**
  - **A**: Construction traffic can be 800-1,200 trips/day. The county must use creative road-use agreements at times because the normal land use process does not fully capture those impacts.
- **Q: What happens when the data centers become obsolete?**

  - **A**: The county is only just starting to think about long-term retirement/repurposing issues and does not yet have a specific local code solution. They and others are working on it.
- **Q: What's the difference between an 'outright use' and a 'conditional use' in Morrow County?**
  - **A**: Data centers on industrial land are treated as a land use decision that is standards-based, not requiring a conditional use permit.

Urban Perspective: **Dan Dias**, Economic and Community Development Director for the City of Hillsboro (City), presented as the urban counterpoint to Morrow County's rural model. He explained that the City of Hillsboro is planning data centers within a compact urban framework inside the Portland / Metro regional system, where the city must coordinate UGB and land use planning through Metro rather than acting alone. The City operates within Metro's regional land use system, so it cannot independently do everything on its own the way a county can.

Data centers are treated as part of Hillsboro's broader 'industrial / information technology target industry cluster', alongside other high-tech and advanced manufacturing uses. Dan noted that Hillsboro's locational value is its proximity to fiber, water, sewer, workforce, transportation, and semiconductor ecosystems, adding that the City's sites are generally smaller, urban infill or edge-of-UGB facilities, not huge hyperscale campuses seen in Morrow County.

Hillsboro has limited available industrial land, so data centers compete with other important industries for the same sites. Data centers are increasingly a core part of the infrastructure that supports technology, biotech, semiconductors, and other industries in the region; the City has 18 data center sites totaling about 430 gross acres. Dan identified power, fiber, speed to market, land availability, and regulatory certainty as key factors in siting.

Hillsboro uses zoning, design standards, setbacks, buffering, and permitting requirements to manage impacts, especially because sites are so much closer to neighborhoods than in rural Oregon. They are seeing more interest in retrofitting existing commercial buildings and multi-story data centers because land is scarce; as a result, land premiums are higher in Hillsboro than in rural areas. From the City's perspective, they are not trying to replicate rural mega-campus development. Instead, they are working to fit data centers into a dense, infrastructure-rich urban economy, while balancing them against other industries that also need land, power, and workforce access.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: Are Hillsboro data centers mostly tied to water?**
  - **A**: Dan clarified that the 18 sites are not all water-connected and vary by function, size, and building count.

- **Q: Are data centers in Hillsboro all the same size?**
  - **A**: Hillsboro sites vary from one building to several buildings, depending on the use.
- **Q: Are data centers in Hillsboro viewed as utilities?**
  - **A:** They are not public utilities, but they are a kind of industrial service / infrastructure support that functions differently from ordinary manufacturing.
- **Q: Why do data centers need proximity in Hillsboro if they're not making physical goods?**
  - **A**: Proximity matters for latency, co-located users, manufacturing/R&D needs, and fast data processing, especially for modern workflows like biotech, digital twins, and low-latency applications.
- **Q: How do you handle local code questions around where data centers can go?**
  - **A**: Because DCAC is doing high-level land use review, not parcel-level land use review, Dan asked the DCAC to send detailed zoning questions directly to city staff for their responses.

How do Data Centers Choose Where to Develop?

The DCAC heard from development companies about the process they use to find and develop data centers, addressing the questions:

- What considerations do companies make when developing new data centers?
- How does Oregon's land use system affect those decisions, if at all?
- How do developers engage local communities and Tribes?

Industry Perspective: **Alison Hoagland**, Architect/ Principal, and Land Use Planner **Ian Sisson**, from Mackenzie, Inc, presented on how data centers are developed and what drives them to specific locations. They differentiated between smaller enterprise/co-location facilities and larger hyperscale/exascale campuses. Data centers generally look for power supply, available land, fiber, water, transportation access, flat land, and low natural hazard risk. Smaller facilities tend to choose urban infill or existing employment/industrial zones, while larger hyperscale facilities more often choose rural areas or at UGB edges for large parcels, high-capacity transmission access, and often a dedicated substation on site.

Mackenzie, Inc. helped update Business Oregon's land use competitiveness matrix to include hyperscale data centers as a distinct industrial category. Terms like "hyperscale" and "exascale" are still evolving and not consistently defined across industry, planning, and government. They described "exascale" as something larger than "hyperscale" and tied more to very high power demand (500+ megawatts). In urban areas, data centers usually fit into existing industrial zones with design and buffering standards, while rural sites may require zoning amendments, map amendments, or goal exceptions. When rural land

conversions are proposed, Tribes are notified and engaged as part of the process if cultural or archaeological resources might be affected.

Alison noted that many data center clients are pursuing stronger sustainability goals, including reduced water and energy use, even beyond current code requirements. She reiterated the growing interest in reusing existing buildings or retrofitting facilities for data center use, especially where land is scarce. From Mackenzie Inc.'s perspective, data center development is highly dependent on infrastructure, speed, and certainty, and that the industry is evolving quickly enough that land use policy and definitions need to stay flexible and adaptable.

Edesa Bitbadal, Director of Public Affairs, Western Region, **Ian Black**, SVP Global Head of Energy, and **Kevin Martin**, Market Manager from Digital Realty (DR), presented data center operator's perspective, highlighting their business model, sustainability practices, siting criteria, and their Hillsboro/Oregon footprint. *[Facilitator's Note: Digital Realty's slide presentation was unavailable for posting.]*

DR is a global builder, owner, and operator of data centers, with 300+ data centers in 55 cities and 30 countries, serving 5,000+ customers. Their facilities support everyday digital services like banking, telehealth, transit, emergency response, online shopping, and cloud services. DR has operated in Oregon since 2012 and in Hillsboro for more than a decade; power, zoning certainty, fiber connectivity, infrastructure access, geography, climate, and regulatory clarity are the main drivers for location decisions.

DR works with brokers, local elected officials, and economic development staff to find sites that work for both the company and the community. Their Hillsboro expansion is focused on infill parcels within the UGB, not large rural campuses. They noted that most of their growth is not AI-related, but rather it is organic growth associated with non-AI-related data services. DR's teams are embedded locally, with employees living in the communities where data centers operate. Edesa emphasized DR's renewable energy use, water reduction, and efficient cooling, noting that 90%+ of their global energy use is renewable, 75%+ of their data centers do not use water globally, and they pursue LEED/Green Globes-type standards. She also described volunteer work, school support, nonprofit partnerships, and local engagement as core to their approach.

New DR facilities are often multi-story, more efficient, and increasingly designed to look like high-tech buildings rather than industrial boxes. They reiterated the growing interest in retrofitting existing buildings and reusing older sites, because power availability is often the limiting factor. Ian explained that power has become a critical-path issue, with some projects moving from distribution-level service to transmission-level service, so the industry is looking at storage, batteries, fuel cells, and other solutions for future load growth. He emphasized that DR wants to pay for the power it uses and not shift costs to the grid or residential customers.

From DR's perspective, data centers are already an essential backbone for today's way of life, and their new Oregon projects are being developed with a focus on predictability, local community engagement and partnership, transparency, sustainability, and efficient use of existing urban infrastructure.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: How do you reconcile the claim that 75% of your sites use no water with the range of facility sizes?**
  - **A**: Ian and Edesa noted DR operates across multiple generations of design, from 2 MW to 400 MW sites, and many newer facilities are air-cooled. The 75% figure reflects the full portfolio, not a single site type.
- **Q: What do you see as the future of power supply for large data centers?**
  - **A**: Ian noted the electric grid's slack is tightening and future solutions will vary by context: batteries, storage, fuel cells, transmission upgrades, and in some cases 'bringing power with the project'. Speed to market for power is critical because customers cannot wait many years.
- **Q: Are you worried about obsolete facilities or stranded assets?**
  - **A:** Edesa and Ian noted they don't see that as a major block because existing facilities are constantly being repurposed, and older buildings can be reused for new data center or logistics purposes.
- **Q: What opportunities exist for existing buildings?**
  - **A**: There is real upside in reusing existing buildings, especially for colocation and retrofits. Their biggest constraint is power delivery.

Oregon Voices: What Could Oregon Data Centers Look Like Through a Land use Lens?
The DCAC heard from three Oregon non-profit policy advocacy organizations regarding their perspectives on land use issues and the future of data centers in the state, addressing the questions:

- What are the challenges and opportunities for data centers in Oregon?
- How can the state assist with these challenges and opportunities?
- Are there examples from other large-scale projects or states that the DCAC should consider?

Policy Advocacy Perspective: **Sam Diaz**, Executive Director, 1000 Friends of Oregon (Friends), presented a policy and advocacy perspective focused on land use guardrails, public benefit, and farmland protection. He framed Oregon's Goal 9 (Economic Development) as the "compass" for Friends' efforts, ensuring adequate opportunities for economic activity that benefit Oregonians. Friends believes Oregon needs to think about shared prosperity, not just growth. Data center expansion is happening rapidly while many Oregonians are seeing layoffs, vacant buildings, and uncertainty about visions for community-driven economic development.

Sam stressed the need for coordinated state and local resources to help communities prepare industrial sites, including brownfield revitalization programs, industrial site readiness, and infrastructure funding for water, sewer, fiber, and roads. Friends advocates for:

- Stronger technical assistance and landowner outreach so communities can aggregate, annex, and prepare land for development more intentionally.
- Protection of agricultural and forestry zoning - data center land use should not weaken protections for resource lands.
- An outcome-oriented use of limited tax abatements and infrastructure dollars, and asking whether the state is getting the jobs, public revenue, and community benefits it wants.
- A statewide inventory of available industrial land, so state and local governments are working from the same facts.
- Clear definitions for data center types, especially as the industry includes very different uses, from critical hospital infrastructure to less essential digital storage.
- Transparency and accountability around jobs, water, energy, and tax benefits.
- Including schools in the conversation, allowing for eligibility for land-readiness or infrastructure investment support when appropriate.

Sam noted that cities like Vancouver have used moratoriums when a land-intensive use was not producing enough community benefit. He emphasized that Friends is not calling for a moratorium on data centers, but they urge the DCAC to push for: better data sets, stronger statewide planning, clearer definitions, more careful allocation of industrial land, and ensuring data center growth produces measurable public benefit, especially for communities, schools, housing, and infrastructure.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: Is the problem really data centers, or broader industrial land policy?**
    - **A**: Data centers are part of a bigger land use and economic development problem: Oregon needs better statewide industrial land strategy, better definitions, and more outcome-based use of public incentives.

Ben Gordon, Executive Director, Central Oregon LandWatch (COLW), presented a policy and advocacy perspective centered on cumulative impacts, land use guardrails, and protecting resource lands. He cautioned that Oregon should not treat data centers as ordinary industrial projects because their water, power, and land demands are unusually large and interconnected. The DCAC should think at the cumulative level, not just project-by-project, because individual approvals can hide the full impact on farmland, water, transmission, and community character.

Prineville and Central Oregon are examples where data centers have been good neighbors so far, but the areas are seeing new pressure for more industrial land. Cities use Economic Opportunity Analyses (EOAs) and then UGB expansions or rural rezonings to support data center land; currently these decisions are too piecemeal for such a large-footprint industry. COLW is concerned about prime farmland conversion, especially when land is described as "just grass" or otherwise undervalued. He cautioned DCAC against precedent-setting one-off exceptions.

Ben also emphasized the risk of overbuilding and 'stranded assets' if data center technology or demand changes over time. COLW calls for a more coordinated statewide strategy: Oregon may need something closer to a NEPA-style environmental review that focuses on purpose, need, potential impacts, and intended public outcomes; or other stronger statewide processes that include some type of cumulative impacts assessment for large, consumptive projects. In addition, industrial lands should be treated as a strategic public asset, not just something to allocate quickly to the highest bidder; the state needs better siting guardrails and clearer definitions, especially for hyperscale and "exascale" facilities. COLW is also concerned about groundwater contamination and nitrates in the Umatilla Basin that tie data center development to broader public-health and environmental questions.

From COLW's perspective, Oregon should slow down and create stronger guardrails before expanding data center land supply any further. Data centers need not be banned outright, but Ben urged the DCAC to push for state-level coordination, cumulative-impact analysis, and protection of farmland and water resources.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: Is Oregon's land use system fundamentally failing?**
  - **A**: Not necessarily, but the system is being stretched by the scale and speed of data center demand. Ben reiterated that Oregon may need better cumulative-impact review and stronger statewide coordination.
- **Q: Are data centers creating enough public value to justify the land conversion?**
  - **A**: The answer depends on clearer articulation of cumulative impacts and whether the long-term public benefit is worth the trade-offs in farmland, water, and infrastructure.

Diane Brandt, Policy & Legislative Affairs Director, Renewable Northwest (RNW), presented a policy perspective focused on how data center growth intersects with both Oregon's energy and land use systems. RNW advocates for the expansion of renewable energy and storage resources in the Northwest through collaboration with government, industry, utilities, customers, and advocacy groups. She emphasized that the region is at a critical point for electricity supply, with both transmission and generation needs growing fast. The issue is not only about data centers; the broader load-growth problem is already stressing the system.

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Diane introduced the WestTEC 10-year Horizon Transmission portfolio, noting that it identifies what is needed to maintain energy reliability in the West over the next decade. Oregon (and the West) faces a significant challenge because there is no regional transmission organization outside California, making for disjointed energy planning. She described the gap between projects that are permitted, in-the-queue, or actually built, noting that many renewable projects are stuck in interconnection queues.

Oregon's land use system is part of the energy problem because energy projects often require Goal 3 exceptions and other land use approvals, which take time. The only energy-related statewide planning goal is Goal 13 (Energy Conservation), and it has not been updated since it was created in 1974. Diane stressed that Oregon's land use system does not yet provide enough balance or guidance for energy siting, especially when energy projects compete with farmland, habitat, and other resource lands. Oregon could benefit from a deliberate statewide process to address the scale of energy and data center demand.

Diane noted that data centers could be part of the solution if policy were designed well, for example, by using minimum contract lengths, early-exit clauses, and demanding commitments to protect residential customers from cost shifts. She cautioned that the state should not rush into changes that could disrupt renewable projects already moving through the system. From RNW's perspective, data centers are forcing Oregon to confront long-standing weaknesses in how it plans for energy infrastructure. Diane urged the DCAC to carefully consider transmission, generation, queue congestion, land use conflicts, and cost allocation, while making sure the response helps, not hurts, the transition to clean energy.

Committee Discussion and Q&A

- **Q: Are the transmission and generation projects you showed tied specifically to data centers?**
    - **A**: Diane noted the maps were based on broader utility planning and load growth; they were not all data-center-specific, though data centers are part of the demand picture.
- **Q: Does "bring your own power" mean power can come from outside Oregon?**
    - **A**: The answer depends on transmission, interconnection, and federal/state market rules; the grid is already constrained. As much as 5 GW of renewable generation is permitted already, but can't get interconnected due to these constraints.
- **Q: Why not use a more regional or state-level environmental review process?**
    - **A:** Oregon's land use system is already carrying a lot of the burden, but the state may need better coordination across energy, land, and permitting.

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Public Comment & DCAC Listening

The DCAC offers members of the public an opportunity to provide public comments focused on the topic of the session in 2–3-minute timeframes. DCAC staff are compiling all written public comments for inclusion as an appendix in the DCAC's final Report to the Governor. DCAC heard public comments from: Nellie McAdams, Dan Diorio, Dirk Knudsen, Jonathan Tallman, Madison Schroeder, and Lynn Handlin.

DCAC Roundtable: Connecting the Dots

DCAC members reflected together on the main themes that emerged throughout this session (and process at large) and began noting possible directions the Committee may want to take in their report to the Governor:

- **Need for clearer definitions**: there was broad agreement that the report will need a glossary or at least agreed definitions for terms like hyperscale, exascale, and possibly different classes of data centers; definitions remain adaptable over time.
- **Data centers as critical infrastructure vs. industrial use**: several members said the idea of data centers as a kind of utility or "critical backbone" kept coming up, but they were not sure they should be fully classified as a public utility. Data centers are infrastructure-like, but unlike utilities they are not natural monopolies, and their outputs are not singular or easy to categorize.
- **Pressure on the land use system**: DCAC Members asked whether Oregon's land-use system is fundamentally broken or just being stretched by unusually large data center demand. A general view was that the system is still strong, but it is under strain, and it needs more datasets, more resources, and clearer policy treatment for large data center projects that are not being accounted/planned for.
- **Need for better data**: DCAC members highlighted the lack of a statewide inventory of industrial land and the need for better mapping and tracking of what land is actually available.
- **Energy link**: the group noted that the land use discussion cannot be separated from energy issues, especially since Oregon's land use goals barely address energy directly and Goal 13 has not been updated since the 1970s.
- **Long-term planning / obsolescence**: DCAC members discussed what might happen if data center buildings become obsolete, and whether the DCAC should think about and comment on end-of-life planning or stranded assets.
- **Public process and trust**: some of the group expressed concern about public notice, transparency, and whether current processes give communities enough voice, especially in places like Hillsboro and Morrow County where expansion is rapid and constant.
- **Different regional models**: the DCAC noted the contrast between rural hyperscale campuses and urban, infrastructure-rich sites like Hillsboro; each may require different policy treatment.

- **Possible policy tools**: DCAC suggestions included more state coordination, more resources for local governments, better definitions, and possibly a more formal review process for large data center projects.

Next Steps and Action Items

- The next DCAC meeting will be on May 29, 2026, focusing on **ENERGY**, with an extended agenda time (9 am – 4 pm PT) to allow for adequate presentation and DCAC discussion.
- The second online General Public Listening Session will be held in June to ensure more voices and perspectives are heard; the date, once confirmed, will be posted to the ODOE DCAC website, as well as all meeting materials and the recording from today's session.
- The DCAC and staff welcomed attendees to provide feedback on how to improve future meetings and that subject matter-related comments may be submitted via the public comment channel.
- **ACTION: Oregon Dept. of Energy / DCAC Staff**: Post slides, meeting materials, and session recording to the ODOE website — *due asap / ongoing*.
- **ACTION: DCAC Chairs & Staff**: Schedule and announce online public listening session for June — *due asap*.

Adjourn Public Meeting

Donna thanked everyone for their thoughtful, respectful, and engaged discussion on this important topic and adjourned the session.

This summary has been prepared by the Facilitation Team to help the DCAC track issues discussed and follow-up actions between sessions. All DCAC Members reviewed the summary and offered refinements that have been integrated into this final version. Questions or comments may be sent to colby@dsconsult.co.

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Participants Present for All or Part of Session 3 (in alphabetical order):

DCAC Members: **Dan Dorran**, **Greg Dotson**, **Bill Edmonds**, **Margaret Hoffmann**, **Michael Jung**, **Tim Miller**, and **Jean Wilson**.

Speakers: **Brenda Bateman** (DLCD), **Edesa Bitbadal** (Digital Realty), **Ian Black (**Digital Realty), **Diane Brandt** (Renewable Northwest), **Dan Dias** (City of Hillsboro), **Sam Diaz** (1000 Friends of Oregon), **Ben Gordon** (Central Oregon LandWatch), **Alison Hoagland** (Mackenzie, Inc.) **Jon Jinings** (DLCD), **Tamra Mabbott** (Morrow County), **Kevin Martin** (Digital Realty), **Leigh McIlvaine** (DLCD), and **Ian Sisson** (Mackenzie, Inc.).

Technical Support: **Nate Redinbo** (Portland State University), **Brenton Riddle** (University of Oregon), and **Douglas Quirke** (University of Oregon).

Facilitation Team: **Donna Silverberg,** facilitator and **Colby Mills**, facilitation & online support DS Consulting.