



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

To: House Interim Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment

From: Oregon Department of Energy

Date: May 2024 | Legislative Days

Re: Energy Facility Siting in Oregon 101

The Oregon Department of Energy is pleased to present an overview on the energy facility siting process in Oregon to the House Interim Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment during May Legislative Days.

The agency wanted to provide additional background materials to the committee, including sharing a series of public blog posts intended to help members of the public better understand the process and how they can get involved. Please see below for four recent examples – each blog post is shared via ODOE’s social media channels and monthly newsletters. For the committee’s convenience, we have included a link to the original blog posts along with introductory text from each.

April 2024: Energy Facilities Spotlight on Meeting the Standards

<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/blog/2024/4/16/energy-facilities-spotlight-meeting-the-standards>

Oregon’s [Energy Facility Siting Council](#), commonly called EFSC, is a seven-member council appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate. They are responsible for overseeing the development of large electric generating facilities, high-voltage transmission lines, gas pipelines, radioactive waste disposal sites, and other energy projects. The Oregon Department of Energy staffs EFSC to ensure they have the information and analysis they need to make their decisions.

A proposed energy facility in [state jurisdiction](#) must go through a thorough review, including a robust public involvement process, before gaining EFSC approval and receiving a site certificate.

The site certificate is similar to a permit and outlines the requirements and standards that must be met for pre-construction, construction, and compliance for operating a facility.

EFSC has a set of standards that energy facilities must meet, including standards to protect natural resources, ensure public health and safety, and protect against adverse environmental effects.

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February 2024: Stay up to Speed on Oregon's Proposed Energy Facilities

<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/blog/2024/2/20/stay-up-to-speed-on-oregons-proposed-energy-facilities>

Did you know the Oregon Department of Energy's energy facility siting team and the Energy Facility Siting Council currently have more than a dozen state jurisdictional [energy facilities](#) in the review pipeline? Most of the facilities that are under review or have been proposed are renewable solar and wind facilities, with a few transmission lines also in the mix.

With so many projects in the line-up, ODOE wants to make sure Oregonians can stay in the loop in this important public process. In addition to providing individual facility updates [on our website](#) and [by email](#) to interested people, our siting team provides a monthly update that outlines all projects that are in review, including current status and what's on the horizon so Oregonians can stay informed about progress and view opportunities to get involved.

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October 2023: Spotlight on Oregon's Energy Facility Siting Process

<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/blog/2023/10/12/spotlight-oregons-energy-facility-siting-process>

Reviewing and potentially siting energy facilities – such as solar, wind, or transmission facilities – in Oregon is a complex and sometimes lengthy process. Proposed energy facilities go through a robust public process to ensure they are up to Oregon's standards before they can be built.

Before a [state-jurisdiction](#) energy facility is built in Oregon, a developer must apply for a site certificate from the state's [Energy Facility Siting Council](#). The council has [seven members](#) who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate. Members are selected to understand, evaluate, and deliberate complex issues associated with proposed facilities and how those facilities affect people, habitat, and communities. Appointees are also selected to ensure broad geographic representation.

[Council meetings](#) are open to the public, and public involvement is built into the council's review. State-level oversight of energy facilities helps ensure that Oregon has an adequate energy supply while protecting Oregon's environment and public safety. Proposed facilities must prove they can meet a set of specific standards to gain approval, including considerations around land use, soil protection, fish and wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, and historic, cultural, and archaeological resources, [among many others](#).

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August 2023: Energy Facility Siting Spotlight on Decommissioning

<https://energyinfo.oregon.gov/blog/2023/8/23/energy-facility-siting-snapshot-decommissioning>

When Oregonians turn on the lights, their power is coming from a [number of resources](#) – from renewable resources like wind and solar to fossil fuel-based generation like natural gas. While some electricity is imported into the state, much of our electricity comes from facilities built right here in Oregon. Many large facilities are reviewed and monitored at the [state level](#), so what happens when one of these facilities has reached the end of its life? The Energy Facility Siting Council — a volunteer, seven-member decision-making body appointed by the Governor and staffed by the Oregon Department of Energy — has established requirements for what happens to the land where facilities are sited, as well as what happens to equipment, like wind turbines and solar panels, when they are decommissioned.

During the original [application process](#) for a state-jurisdiction facility, the Council ensures that project developers have the expertise to not only construct and operate a project, but to also retire the facility and restore the site to a useful, non-hazardous condition when the facility permanently closes. That requirement also stands if a facility begins construction but decides not to complete the project – the developer must still return the site to a useful, non-hazardous condition.

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