

Following up from the January 14, 2026, HCEE Legislative Days meeting, you'll find response to committee members' questions below:

State Energy Strategy agenda item:

1. From Rep. Gamba's question about **the report that ODOE referenced** during the state energy strategy presentation:

Christy Splitt (ODOE) responded: The Sylvan Energy Analytics report ([Near-term winter resource adequacy challenges in the Pacific Northwest](#)) includes a review of E3's Northwest RA Study Phase 1 and independent evaluation of near-term winter challenges.

Stakeholder Comments on the State Energy Strategy agenda item:

2. Rep. Osborne's question during the stakeholder comments about the energy strategy regarding Oregon's **electricity mix** and the **reason energy rates have increased**:

ODOE published two pieces that are directly responsive. Here is [a link to the Oregon Electricity Resource Mix](#) page (the data lags because they have to get the information from so many folks). They also had a piece in last year's Biennial Energy Report about why rates have been going up; it aligns with what Tucker said and is true across both COUs and IOUs that wildfire is a primary driver. Here's a link to [Electricity Rate Increase Drivers — Energy Info](#).

3. Rep. Gamba asked about **small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs)** and how long will it take to deploy them in Oregon and where in this hemisphere can you point to show effective implementation of them.

Tucker Billman's (Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association [ORECA]) response:

From: Tucker Billman tbillman@oreca.org

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 9:08 AM

To: Pischke Erin Erin.Pischke@oregonlegislature.gov

Subject: RE: Follow-up from 1/14 HCEE meeting

I did ask for some information from a nuclear energy expert at Energy Northwest, and he shared the below and said I can share it with the committee. I would be happy to help get him in touch with the committee if there are further questions. Please consider me only a messenger, here. The thoughts and ideas he expresses are not ORECA's, although we very much respect his knowledge of the topic at hand:

“While no SMRs have been built and put online in the western hemisphere, there are currently projects well under way. Ontario Power Generation has made real progress on building a GE BWRX-300 and expects to have the first unit online and producing power by the end of 2030. The USNRC has completed the environmental and safety review of the TerraPower construction permit application for their Natrium project in Kemmerer, Wyoming, and they expect to be online on a similar timeline. The Dow Corporation project in Texas deploying the X-energy Xe-100 SMR is working toward being online by 2033. The Energy Northwest Xe-100 project is working to follow right behind that timeline, applying the learnings directly to their project in real time, and will deploy four reactors in the mid-2030’s. The project will be licensed for twelve modules, allowing the follow-on modules to be deployed within the next three years, meaning a total of almost a gigawatt of power could be online in just 12 years.

While these SMRs have not been deployed before in the US, the GE BWRX-300 is just a scaled-down, simplified version of their proven BWR technology operating in the US today. The Natrium technology is based on the Fast Flux Test Facility, which operated in WA for over a decade. And the Xe-100 design is similar to reactors that were licensed and operated in the US, Germany, and other countries.

China has proven that once you build a nuclear project or two, the costs and schedules start to come down significantly and it soon becomes very cost-effective and predictable. Like was done with renewables many years ago when they were too expensive and slow, we need to start today to get these technologies deployed and get good at building nuclear again in this country.”

Tucker Billman

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4. Rep. Owens asked a question about why some **solar manufacturers in Oregon are declaring bankruptcy** if clean energy is truly affordable.

Nora Apter (Climate Solutions) responded: Thank you for your question during last week's HCEE stakeholder panel on the Oregon Energy Strategy. As promised, I am following up with a bit more context because the issue of recent solar manufacturer bankruptcies is often misunderstood as a signal about the cost of clean energy itself.

As I mentioned during the hearing, federal tax credits or not, clean energy remains the lowest-cost new electricity resource available today. Independent analyses (including the [U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)) consistently show that wind and solar are cheaper than new fossil generation on a levelized cost basis, even without incentives. That reality is reflected in the market: per the EIA, roughly [90% of new U.S. electricity generation capacity added in 2025 is wind, solar, and storage](#). Utilities and developers are choosing these resources because they are the most economical and typically the fastest way to meet new energy demand.

Many of the recent bankruptcies are not about whether solar is “affordable,” but about what happens when federal policies dramatically shift and impact project financing assumptions and pay-back periods. If a project is financed assuming a 30% federal tax credit will be available, and those credits expire or are disrupted, that will affect cash flow, just as it would in any energy project or industry if a core financial assumption suddenly changed. That does not mean the underlying product is inherently expensive or uncompetitive; it means policy instability creates risk, especially in capital-intensive industries with high upfront costs.

This is also a problem for rooftop solar projects in Oregon, where federal tax credits brought down the upfront cost and led to higher savings on electric bills for homeowners and businesses. Medford-based solar company Purelight Power recently declared bankruptcy, leading to 84 folks losing their jobs locally, and made clear it was a consequence of President Trump’s signature bill, HR 1. As a business journal [reported](#) about the bankruptcy: “By removing the 30% Investment Tax Credit (ITC) and other federal perks, the “payback period” for a residential solar system in Oregon has effectively doubled for many homeowners, leading to a massive drop-off in new sales across the sector.”

As was highlighted throughout last week’s hearing, this is also an Oregon economic issue. Again, we do not produce oil or gas in Oregon, we import them, and the associated jobs and profits largely leave the state. Clean energy, by contrast, harnesses a local resource

and creates in-state jobs, manufacturing opportunities, and local tax base. If we want that economic activity to stay here, it makes sense to ensure projects can pencil out, including by doing all that we can in supporting local projects to leverage federal incentives while they exist.

Finally, it's worth noting that fossil fuels have benefited from substantial and long-standing subsidies for over a century, many of which are permanent features of the tax code. One report found that while HR 1 cut support for clean energy, it *increased* subsidies for the fossil fuel industry an additional \$4B per year, totaling [nearly \\$40B in federal subsidies for oil, gas, and coal](#). Clean energy incentives are comparatively newer, time-limited, and far more exposed to policy shifts.

Unfortunately, Oregon is a challenging place to develop energy infrastructure even when the economics are strong. Over the past decade, [Oregon ranked 47th in the nation](#) for bringing new renewables onto the grid. Interconnection backlogs at BPA, siting and permitting complexity, and long timelines all add cost and uncertainty. Incentives help offset those barriers; when they disappear, projects become harder to finance here relative to other states.

In short: clean energy is affordable and increasingly dominant because it is the lowest-cost option. Bankruptcies reflect policy and market volatility, not a failure of the technology. Stable policy and reduced development barriers are what allow Oregon to capture the cost savings, jobs, and economic benefits that clean energy offers.

I look forward to continuing the conversation and would welcome the chance to discuss further if helpful.

Best regards,
Nora Apter

Nora Apter | Oregon Director

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Data Centers' Potential Impacts on Oregon agenda item:

5. Rep. Marsh's question during the data center presentation: **How does ODOE define large loads?**

Christy Splitt (ODOE) responded: In the Oregon Energy Strategy, the term "large loads" is not explicitly defined.

Cross-Cutting Action 1 (p. 89) reads: *Impose registration and reporting requirements upon all **new large electric loads** to inform greenhouse gas emissions analyses, and evaluate whether policy changes are needed to bring emissions in line with state policies. This would require an action from the Environmental Quality Commission.*

The text below this action references BPA's definition of "New Large Single Loads," but ODOE did not explicitly recommend applying this as the level for registration and reporting requirements. The scope of "new large electric loads" is something that we anticipate the Environmental Quality Commission would define, and that the BPA definition could help inform.

The intent of referring to "new large electric loads" was to ensure that data centers are covered, but not limit the action to data centers since any large electric load poses similar concerns over demand and emissions. The intent was also to cover large electric loads across all utility service territories. Existing policies such as HB 2021 and the Power Act do not apply to all utilities across the state, including those where we see many tech loads emerging.