



Memorandum

Date: Feb. 26, 2026
To: Environmental Quality Commission
From: Leah Feldon, Director
Subject: Agenda item F, informational item: Governor's Natural Resources Team Update
March 12, 2026, EQC meeting

Purpose and importance of item

Members of Governor Kotek's Natural Resources Office will brief the commission on a suite of climate and resilience related Executive Orders issued in late 2025.

Prior EQC involvement

The commission received a preliminary briefing on Executive Orders 25-25, 25-26, and 25-29 at their December 2025 meeting. Additionally, the commission received a more detailed briefing on a provision in EO 25-29 directing DEQ and the commission to initiate rulemaking to strengthen the Low Carbon Fuel Standard.

Background

Over the last several months, Governor Kotek has issued a trio of Executive Orders focused on accelerating clean energy development, promoting landscape and climate resilience, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. DEQ, and in some instances, the Environmental Quality Commission, has a role in implementing each.

EO 25-25: Accelerating Wind and Solar Energy Development in Advance of Elimination of Federal Clean Energy Tax Credits

The order directs relevant state agencies, boards, and commissions to take all steps necessary, and authorized by existing statutes, to accelerate and prioritize siting and permitting reviews, approvals, and processes necessary to expedite the permitting and development of solar and wind energy projects in Oregon that seek to qualify for federal clean energy tax credits requiring construction to commence by July 4, 2026.

DEQ conducts certain environmental review and permitting activities for the siting and development of clean energy projects. Additionally, some projects seeking to take advantage of expiring federal tax credits also work with DEQ's Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund as a component of its financing strategy. Generally speaking, DEQ is working through each project and their associated loans, where relevant, on a case-by-case basis. As summarized below, DEQ will work to obtain loans through the established process as quickly as possible and will evaluate on a case-by-case basis, exercising flexibility where appropriate. Based on the circumstances for each project, DEQ may consider a categorical exclusion or partial waivers to accelerate the process. Additionally, specific actions the agency is taking to implement this order include:

- Authorizing up to \$2 million in principal forgiveness for projects also seeking and qualifying for Clean Water SRF funds (e.g., solar panel installation over irrigation canals to provide shade).
- Prioritizing technical assistance and guidance to help solar borrowers and contractors understand the CWSRF program.
- Customizing recommendations and opportunities based on specific project requirements.

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- Prioritizing document reviews and loan agreement preparation.
- Seeking options to expedite federal and state reviews for environmental and cultural resources.
- Authorizing limited waivers or considering categorical exclusions where applicable.

EO25-26: Directing State Agencies to Take Urgent Action to Promote the Resilience of Our Communities and Natural and Working Lands and Waters

The order directs state agencies to prioritize and accelerate climate resilient strategies within existing state programs to deliver benefits for communities and ecosystems. Implementation will be coordinated through mandatory biennial plans and inter-agency teams, with consolidated reporting to ensure transparency and accountability to Tribal nations, stakeholders, and the legislature.

DEQ will play a supporting role in implementing the EO's directives, including its objective to "protect, conserve, connect or restore ten percent of lands and water in Oregon within ten years, compared to baseline conditions in 2025." Potential supporting actions include, but are not limited to, advancing mitigation solutions; supporting Oregon's "Plan for a Resilient Oregon," a statewide planning effort to help communities adapt and thrive in the face of climate risks; and continuing to support the development of community smoke response plans to protect public health while increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire.

DEQ and other state agencies are directed to develop a biennial plan that describes how we will implement elements of the order relevant to our work. Two teams will provide coordination and oversight of the implementation of this order:

1. Agency Leadership Team: a group of agency directors, senior staff, and the Governor's Natural Resources staff.
2. Board and Commission Oversight Team: a group of board and commission members from the relevant natural resource agencies.

EO25-29: Executive Order on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Advancing Oregon's Clean Energy Future

Along with a specific suite of actions, this order directs executive branch agencies to adopt and implement greenhouse gas reduction strategies and align their decisions, activities, and investments, as appropriate, to advance the five least-cost pathways identified in the Oregon Energy Strategy, accelerating our state's resilient clean energy future. The Governor's Office will take a leadership role in advancing the efforts associated with this order. It is the responsibility of each agency director to ensure appropriate coordination and implementation contemplated by this order are integrated into agency programs and initiatives.

In addition to general directives related to streamlining the implementation of environmental review and permitting activities for clean energy development, energy storage and associated infrastructure, DEQ and the commission are directed to evaluate the status and projected growth of the clean fuels markets and update and strengthen the Low Carbon Fuels Standard to achieve a 50% reduction in carbon intensity of transportation fuels by 2040. DEQ must submit a work plan for this effort within three months.

Similar to EO 25-26, DEQ is directed to plan and report requirements under the order, some of which will involve coordination with and reporting to the commission.

Supporting materials

- A. [EO 25-25: Accelerating Wind and Solar Energy Development in Advance of Elimination of Federal Clean Energy Tax Credits](#)
- B. [EO25-26: Directing State Agencies to Take Urgent Action to Promote the Resilience of Our Communities and Natural and Working Lands and Waters](#)

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- C. [EO25-29: Executive Order on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Advancing Oregon's Clean Energy Future](#)

Report prepared by Matthew Davis

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