

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Advancing Oregon's Clean Energy Future

Executive Order No. 25-29

Actions to streamline DEQ-related permitting and construction for clean-energy projects.

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Background

Oregon faces growing climate risks — extreme weather, wildfires, water shortages, and rising energy costs — that threaten communities, public health, and the economy. Executive Order 25-29, aligned with the State Energy Strategy, sets a unified statewide approach to accelerate clean-energy development and guide long-term infrastructure planning so Oregon's energy needs are met with affordable, reliable, clean power.

The Order directs state agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and align decisions with the Strategy's five least-cost pathways, including streamlining permitting and construction for clean-energy facilities.

DEQ plays a key role in permitting these projects. This report outlines the actions DEQ is taking to identify and address barriers that slow the permitting and construction of clean-energy projects and their supporting infrastructure.

Reducing Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment

The Oregon Department of Energy and the Department of Land Conservation and Development were directed to identify barriers that slow or complicate permitting, construction, and interconnection of clean-energy projects. DEQ contributes to this work through its Construction Stormwater permitting program and its 401 Water Quality Certification program. The Oregon Department of Energy's report on Reducing Barriers to Clean Energy Deployment highlighted several challenges including three with DEQ touchpoints: unexpected delays, limited cross-jurisdictional coordination and limited staffing capacity.

DEQ is already implementing process-streamlining actions under the Governor's Prosperity Roadmap and Executive Order 23-04 on housing. While these efforts focus on economic prosperity and housing, they also benefit clean-energy projects because the same Construction Stormwater and 401 Water Quality Certification permits are often required.

DEQ has completed or is advancing several efforts to reduce barriers in the Construction Stormwater program, including:

- Renewal of the 1200-C General Permit (Dec. 15, 2025).
- Expanded training, outreach, and support to improve application quality.
- Creation of an internal coordination team to align work across programs.
- Development of a standardized "DEQ Packet" for early project-planning clarity.
- Improved guidance and technical assistance for timely permit review.
- Hiring an Environmental Engineer to work with local governments and permittees, and update stormwater guidance materials.

Better coordination across state and local jurisdictions could further benefit clean-energy developers. Existing models, such as Regional Solutions Teams and Oregon's One-Stop Meetings for infrastructure financing, show how coordinated guidance can simplify complex permitting and land-use challenges.

Federal policy changes, including proposed amendments to the definition of "Waters of the United States," may create regulatory gaps. DEQ is working with the Department of State Lands to maintain clarity for Dredge and Fill projects and 401 Certifications involving work in wetlands.

Staffing shortages continue to slow reviews and limit innovative solutions. While staffing constraints may persist, targeted process improvements can make permitting more efficient and predictable for project sponsors.

Looking ahead to the 2027–29 biennium, DEQ will continue implementing streamlining actions in the State Housing Interagency Partnership workplan and will keep collaborating with the Department of State Lands to address regulatory gaps related to federal water policy changes.