Clean Energy

Every community member has access to affordable clean energy

Goal: Every community member has access to affordable clean energy.

Description

Ensuring that every community member has access to affordable clean energy is a cornerstone of climate justice. Energy is essential for survival and for a thriving life. However, historical and systemic injustices have limited equal access to energy, including to the benefits of clean energy and new technologies.

Our energy systems are changing rapidly due in part to policies that address climate change and to the availability and declining costs of new technologies like solar power and battery energy storage. However, without an explicit commitment to justice, a clean energy future could replicate past harms and leave many behind. A clean energy future in which people cannot afford their energy bills is neither just nor how our community defines success.

The clean energy transition can be a powerful tool for community empowerment, unlocking new job markets and fostering economic prosperity and wealth building. The many organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders engaged in this transition must ensure that these benefits also accrue to frontline communities, and not only to actors that have traditionally benefited from the energy sector. The clean energy transition is critical to achieving Multnomah County's greenhouse gas reduction goals. If implemented thoughtfully, a clean and just energy transition will also lead to better health outcomes from reduced air and water pollution, as well as additional community resilience.

How we measure progress

Indicator 1: Percentage of energy-burdened households

Description: Households that spend six percent or more of their total income on home energy costs are considered energy burdened. Those households are often making difficult choices about which expenses to pay, like whether to keep the lights and heat on or pay for food or medical costs.

Current data: 27 percent of households in Multnomah County were considered energy burned in 2023.

Indicator 2: Sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County

Description: Greenhouse gas emissions in Multnomah County are generated predominantly from the combustion of fossil fuels for transportation, heating, and electricity generation. As we transition our energy systems to clean sources of energy, our greenhouse gas emissions will also decrease dramatically. Multnomah County's goal is to transition to 100 percent clean and renewable sources of energy by 2050, with zero carbon emissions from its energy supply. Electrifying energy systems is the key to enabling this transition. As the community progresses towards these goals, a growing percentage of the energy mix will be attributed to electricity and to a lesser extent bio-based fuels.

Current data:

2023 Carbon Emissions by Source

Source	Percentage
Electricity	26%
Gasoline	24%
Natural Gas	21%
Diesel	16%
Process & Fugitive Emissions	4%
Distillate Fuel Oil No. 2	4%
Other Sources	2%
Propane	2%
Solid Waste	2%

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Indicator 3: Sources of electricity serving Multnomah County

Description: Electrifying transportation, space heating, and other end-uses is a key pillar of any decarbonization strategy. Electrification is inherently efficient when compared to burning fossil fuels. For example, an automobile loses over half of the energy from gasoline to waste heat, while an electric vehicle uses nearly all of the energy stored in its batteries for moving the vehicle. However, the source of that electricity is equally important. Today, an electricity system powered with clean technologies like solar, wind, and storage can be more cost-effective than one powered by coal and natural gas. The Oregon Legislature and local governments including Multnomah County have adopted important policies to transition the state's utilities to all renewable sources, but much work remains.

Current data:

Multnomah County Grid Electricity Generation Mix (2023)

Source	Percentage
Natural Gas	38%
Unspecified	15%
Coal	14%
Hyrdo	12%
Wind	11%
Solar	5%
Bonneville Power Admin.	4%
Biogas	<1%
Biomass	<1%
Geothermal	<1%
Fuel Oil	<1%
Hydrogen Fuel Cell	<1%
Other Anthropogenic	<1%

Indicator 4: Renewable energy generation in Multnomah County

Description: Nearly all of the electricity consumed in Multnomah County comes from outside of its borders. Indeed, much of our electricity comes from across the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is value in having sources of electricity supply across a diversity of technologies and locations. For example, wind often is strongest when the sun isn't shining and wind production in regions like Montana tend to match well with local energy use patterns. Electricity supply and demand can differ across geographies at different times, and a connected system means that resources can be optimized, creating system efficiencies and cost savings. However, localized energy sources can also have significant economic and resilience value, and support self determination. Multnomah County and its communities have made a shared commitment to securing at least 2% of electricity used in Multnomah County from local, community-based resources.

Current data: As of 2023, 1.1 percent of the electricity used in the City of Portland is generated from renewable sources within the City's borders.

Strategy: Decarbonize Multnomah County Operations and strengthen the resilience of County infrastructure.

Why does this matter?

The Multnomah County government has long been considered a leader in sustainable operations. From installing one of the first green roofs in the region to the recent completion of a new net-zero building (Library Operations Center), examples of Multnomah County's leadership abound. Multnomah County must be an example of the decarbonized future for the whole community.

This strategy will prioritize the replacement of equipment at or near the end of its useful life with low- or zero-carbon alternatives in order to minimize any disruption of critical community services as well as budget impacts. Further savings will come from avoided utility costs thanks to energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Additionally, as part of its decarbonization efforts the County will also look for additional opportunities to "harden" its infrastructure against climate extremes in order to help ensure operational continuity.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate
- ○ Research
- ○ Convene
- ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Maximize solar generation opportunities at County Facilities and leverage County facilities and property for the development of community-benefitting clean energy projects, like community solar.
- Implement a fleet decarbonization plan with the goal of fully decarbonizing the fleet by 2050.
- Implement a capital improvement plan to electrify County facilities, prioritizing end of life system upgrades.
- Work to connect County buildings to thermal energy networks when those become available.
- Develop low carbon building materials standards.
- Evaluate critical County infrastructure for durability and operability under climate extremes.

Lead Department(s)

Department of County Assets, Office of Sustainability

Strategy: Work to limit rate increases and support rate setting processes that better consider affordability and other residential customers' interests.

Why does this matter?

Energy affordability is critical to ensuring a just energy transition. Energy utility rates have steadily and significantly increased over the past five years (~50% from 2021 to 2025), and are likely to continue to increase. New programs have been established by the Oregon Legislature and the Oregon Public Utility Commission to provide additional support to low income ratepayers who are experiencing energy burden and to address the risk of additional increases related to utilities serving customers like large data centers. More work is needed to fully address energy burden in the state, as well as to ensure that all communities are able to benefit from new and existing technologies that offer energy savings opportunities.

Putting this into practice

- Engage at the Legislature and Public Utility Commission on policies and proceedings with the potential to mitigate rate increases for residential customers and to ensure that utilities are incentivized to limit their costs and not shift risks to residential customers while meeting state policy and prioritizing community benefits.
- Support efforts that better utilize existing grid assets and other strategies that are least cost and better utilize distributed energy resources.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

● **County Strategy**
○ Investment Opportunity
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Strategy: Work to strengthen policies and programs that reduce disconnections and energy burden for low-income people of Multnomah County, and expand accessibility to these programs by reducing barriers and expanding robust outreach to eligible communities.

Why does this matter?

Oregon has had programs that offer some support to low-income customers for decades, although they have never been sufficiently funded to ensure energy security for Oregonians with low-incomes. These program offerings have expanded and evolved over time, helping countless families. Persistent grassroots advocacy has delivered crucial policies like HB 2475 (2021), the Energy Affordability Act, giving the Oregon Public Utility Commission the authority to consider energy burdens on low-income customers and other economic, social equity or environmental justice factors that affect affordability. Last year, HB 3792 (2025) doubled funding for bill assistance grants for Pacific Power and PGE customers, setting a framework for funding for these grants to keep pace with bill increases. These and other policies have resulted in new approaches to address energy burden in the state, including programs that allow households to receive a discount in their utility bill based on their income, forgiveness and programs for utility debt relief, and stronger disconnection protections. Additional work is needed to ensure that community members with low incomes can access these programs and avoid the harms that stem from disconnections.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ○ Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Continue to advocate for policies and programs that prevent disconnections for low-income customers, including robust discount and bill assistance grants that keep pace with rising energy rates, as well as evolving disconnection protections and utility debt relief tools that target those most vulnerable.
- Continue to advocate for reduced barriers to accessing and remaining enrolled in energy programs.
- Continue to advocate for improvements in utility outreach about energy assistance programs and protections, and support through programs at Multnomah County that work with potentially eligible households.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability, Department of County Human Services, Youth and Family Services

Strategy: Support efforts to accelerate strategic electrification in buildings.

Why does this matter?

The 2025 Oregon Energy Strategy emphasizes that accelerating strategic electrification in buildings is a fundamental "least-cost pathway" to meeting the state's energy and climate goals. For electrification to be considered strategic, it must advance one of the following areas without adversely affecting the others: (1) benefits consumers over the long run; (2) enables better grid management; and (3) reduces negative environmental impacts.

By transitioning from fossil fuel combustion to high-efficiency electric systems, like heat pumps, Oregon can significantly reduce its overall energy demand—modeled to drop by 22% by 2050—while simultaneously lowering greenhouse gas emissions. This shift is critical for affordability, as it helps families and businesses avoid the rising costs and risks associated with fossil fuels and leverages technologies that are more efficient to operate over the long term.

Beyond cost containment and climate benefits, electrification can be a cornerstone for grid reliability and public health. Electrified buildings equipped with smart technology can act as flexible resources, shifting energy use to times when renewable sources like wind and solar are most abundant or reducing use during times when there is a lot of demand for electricity. This flexibility can reduce the need for costly new generation and transmission projects. Furthermore, removing onsite combustion improves indoor air quality and public health. By focusing on an equitable transition, this strategy ensures that the resulting economic growth—estimated to support up to 16,000 new jobs—benefits all Oregonians while creating a more resilient and dependable energy future.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Putting this into practice

- Advocate for changes to federal and state programs, as well as Energy Trust of Oregon offerings, to explicitly support the electrification of end uses, including fuel switching from methane (natural gas) to electric sources of heating and cooking.
- Advocate for changes in community action partner (weatherization) programs so that strategic electrification is a funded measure.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy: Engage in policy conversations related to achieving clean energy goals while maintaining reliability and affordability.

Why does this matter?

Two major Oregon policies, HB 2021 (2021), which addresses greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity supply, and the Climate Protection Program (2021, 2024), which addresses greenhouse gas from the liquid and gaseous fuel supplies, are designed to meet two-thirds of the state's long term greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal. These policies, as well as several other key legislative, regulatory, and executive actions form the foundation of Oregon's effort to eliminate its greenhouse gas emissions. Key to all of these policies is the transition from fossil-based to clean sources of energy, but there are a number of interrelated issues that must also be considered to ensure that energy reliability and affordability are maintained. In particular, after decades of limited growth in demand for electricity, the Pacific Northwest is facing significant new growth in electricity demand primarily due to large data centers and end-use electrification. The new demand needs to be met at the same time as Oregon and several surrounding states look to replace existing fossil fuel generation with clean alternatives. A number of new opportunities provide pathways to addressing potential electricity supply challenges, including additional transmission capacity that supports sharing resources across regions and battery energy storage that can both store excess renewable energy generation and shift demand to when resources are available.

The clean energy transition is necessary but highly complex. Without a full consideration of the issues and space for everyone to be heard, there is a risk that the region will miss out on innovative approaches that maximize the opportunities the energy transition presents. Importantly, a careful approach is key to minimize the risk of leaving those with the fewest means worse off. Local government voices are key in those conversations and processes, given their close interaction with constituencies, and their roles as large utility customers and entities with a perspective that is often highly valued in utility and regulatory spaces. Additionally, the Office of Sustainability has played an important role in supporting environmental justice coalitions engaged in clean energy transition conversations by amplifying their important perspectives and supporting the organization of effective advocacy spaces. Finally, decision makers, advocates and implementation partners need complete, transparent and accurate information to navigate different scenarios and opportunities. Fortunately, efforts like the Oregon Energy Strategy, numerous legislative and regulatory pathways, and outside research have set a foundation for a thoughtful approach to a clean energy future.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Putting this into practice

- Advocate for the full implementation of major climate policies in Oregon, including HB 2021 (2021), the Climate Protection Program, and others at the Oregon Legislature, the Oregon Public Utility Commission, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and other relevant regulatory and decisionmaking bodies.
- Advocate for transparency and accuracy in the energy planning environment, including additional research into electricity demand and community beneficial resource pathways, and for a full consideration of the environmental benefits and risks of alternative fuel sources like hydrogen, bio-methane, and liquid bio-fuels.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy: Support efforts by environmental justice communities to influence decision-makers on energy rates and other energy-related policy issues.

Why does this matter?

The voices of environmental justice community members have historically been left out of decision making spaces that impact the cost of their energy and their access to energy investments and their related benefits (e.g. the economic and environmental benefits of rooftop solar). While organizations like the Citizens Utility Board of Oregon (CUB) have raised concerns on behalf of residential and low-income rate-payers, it is only in the past ten years that additional justice and community oriented voices have been able to engage more deeply in energy related policy at the Legislature and the Oregon Public Commission. This increased engagement has required a tremendous commitment from these organizations as they have grown their capacity and expertise while demanding changes to make regulatory processes more accessible. They also successfully advocated for funding to support their efforts to bring their crucial perspective to energy decision-making spaces. More recently, environmental justice organizations and communities have also worked to bring the perspectives of environmental justice community members directly to decision makers. Consequently, new approaches to decision-making in energy spaces are underway, such as training for community members and translation services at regulatory proceedings. But these efforts will require a sustainable investment in community expertise and capacity to engage. The Office of Sustainability has played a key supporting role in these efforts, providing expertise and capacity to coalition efforts.

Putting this into practice

- Continue to work with community partners to expand the capacity of community-based organizations and grassroots advocates to advocate for their priorities at the state level. These efforts include the Energy Justice Cohort that Multnomah County has co-facilitated for three years in collaboration with several energy and environmental justice partner organizations.
- Continue to partner with community based organizations to secure grant funding for ongoing projects like the Energy Justice Cohort.
- Continue providing support in coalition spaces that allow energy justice advocates to leverage each other's expertise and advance policy wins on energy burden and community clean energy programs, as well as other energy justice priorities.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ● **County Strategy**
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

● Existing ○ Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Strategy: In partnership with environmental justice communities, develop a shared definition and vision of energy justice and identify quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress over time.

Why does this matter?

Energy justice is a critical component of climate justice, but a lack of shared understanding of what this means in practice and how it can be measured over time can be a barrier to its full consideration in the complex energy planning space. Investments in distributed and community based renewable energy can provide significant opportunities for community benefit, but there is often a disconnect between community priorities and traditional energy planning processes. The impact of programs and policies that seek to address energy burden may be limited without centering community experience in their development.

A strong foundation for this effort is in place. Multnomah County's 100x50 Resolution (2017-046) includes an initial goal of meeting at least 2% of the community's total energy needs with community-based renewable energy infrastructure. Community-benefitting clean energy infrastructure is also an important feature of HB 2021 (2021), Clean Energy for All, and its subsequent implementation. HB 2475 (2021), Energy Affordability Act, presents new opportunities to deepen understanding of energy burden, including through new data collection and reporting. Each of these efforts would benefit from a strengthened understanding of energy justice and from additional real world community experience and expertise collected through new community-led qualitative data collection approaches.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
● **Investment Opportunity**
○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ● Research
● Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Putting this into practice

- Convene environmental justice stakeholders to develop and articulate a shared vision of energy justice, including specific outcomes related to community based renewable energy, energy resilience, and energy burden.
- Support community-led efforts to gather community experience and insights related to energy justice, and prioritize those in the County's energy related programs and advocacy.
- Refine the energy related indicators in the Climate Justice Plan to include county level data on energy justice, including utility disconnections, bill discount program participation, and community-based energy assets.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy: Support transportation electrification in the community, especially for households most burdened by transportation costs and who have limited access to electric vehicles or charging equipment.

Why does this matter?

The Oregon Energy Strategy highlights vehicle electrification as a cornerstone of its "least-cost pathway," noting that transitioning to electric vehicles (EVs) provides substantial financial relief for Oregonians over the long term. Modeling within the strategy found that electrification offers one of the best opportunities to reduce energy use and save household money during the energy transition. According to the document's "Energy Wallet" analysis, while the upfront cost of an EV may be higher, most households will experience significant net savings due to lower fueling and maintenance expenses. Furthermore, because electric motors are far more energy-efficient than gasoline engines, electrifying on-road transportation is projected to reduce the state's total economy-wide energy demand by 27%.

Beyond direct financial savings, this strategy identifies critical systemic and public health benefits. When combined with efforts to reduce total vehicle miles traveled, electrification will provide the greatest local air quality improvements, drastically reducing harmful pollutants like nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. To support this transition, local initiatives—such as those in Multnomah County—are expanding the network of publicly accessible chargers at community-serving locations like libraries. This infrastructure is vital for ensuring equity, particularly for residents of apartment buildings who cannot charge at home. Additionally, a growing fleet of EVs can act as a flexible grid resource, shifting demand away from peak hours through managed charging. This flexibility can reduce the need for costly new power plants and transmission infrastructure, ultimately benefiting all utility ratepayers while improving air quality and health outcomes across the state.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ● **Investment Opportunity**
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Putting this into practice

- Expand the number of electric vehicle charges available at public locations owned by the County.
- Advocate for the continuation of programs like the Oregon Charge Ahead Rebate and other incentives that support low income household access to EV's.
- Advocate for utility programs that cost-effectively leverage the grid flexibility value of electric vehicles.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability

Strategy: Expand access to and the scope of low- and moderate-income residential energy efficiency programs to promote health, stability and resilience.

Why does this matter?

The County has had a long standing low-income home weatherization program that helps to stabilize households by lowering energy bills and addressing household hazards. The County's weatherization program focuses on the lowest income households and serves people living in apartment buildings and single family homes. These households are not well served by market solutions, and may struggle with access to financing for projects or may have only limited options as renters. In addition, deferred maintenance and home repairs often have to be completed first in order to make energy related investments in a household.

Recent efforts like the Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) offer new opportunities to serve communities in need, and it is critical that different providers work together to align services around the best outcomes for community members. This includes pursuing additional funding to serve more households outside of the City of Portland who cannot be served by PCEF, and new partnerships that bring together health, social service and other community providers around shared goals. Given the number of challenges community members face and the limited resources to serve them, residential programs should simultaneously address energy burden, aging in place, safety, resilience, and comfort.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ● **Investment Opportunity**
- ○ Community Leadership

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ● Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

Low Med High

COUNTY INFLUENCE

Low Med High

COUNTY PRIORITY

Low Med High

Putting this into practice

- Pursue new sources of funding, including grants, that support expanding the number of low-to-moderate income people who can access weatherization and home electrification and energy resilience opportunities.
- Align with, and leverage, efforts and funding that supports healthy housing, aging in place, and other housing stabilization approaches.

Lead Department(s)

Office of Sustainability, Department of County Human Services

Strategy: Support policies and programs that reduce barriers to community members accessing distributed energy resources and other technologies that can bring value to both the customer and the electricity system and support a just energy transition.

Why does this matter?

Distributed energy resources have a direct impact on household energy use, offering energy solutions that empower individuals to address their energy footprint and manage costs. These solutions include rooftop and community solar, battery energy storage, smart thermostats and demand response, and energy efficiency measures, including heat pumps. These solutions can also support communities by creating value for households in the form of reduced energy bills, improved health and comfort, and energy resilience in case of power disruptions. These solutions can also benefit all customers by increasing the utilization of the existing grid, and can typically be implemented much more quickly than larger scale approaches. This approach supports the transition of the larger grid by providing small-scale solutions that translate to larger positive impacts on grid capacity.

Putting this into practice

- Collaborate with energy justice partners to advocate for prioritizing community-based and distributed energy resources to meet existing and future energy needs in utility planning and regulatory spaces and in potential future legislation.
- Advocate for approaches that ensure access to distributed resources for low- and moderate-income households.

Lead Department(s)

Oregon Legislature, Oregon Public Utility Commission

STRATEGY CATEGORY

◯ County Strategy
◯ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ◯ Research
◯ Convene ◯ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

◯ Existing ● Additional ◯ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Strategy: Support policies to ensure utilities use ratepayer funds in the public interest.

Why does this matter?

Utility companies have a legitimate need to communicate with regulators and the public. However, because the utilities serving Multnomah County residents and businesses are regulated monopolies, there is a risk that ratepayer funds may be used for lobbying activities that can be, or can be perceived to be, outside the interest of their customers. Previous legislative reform efforts have sought to bring more transparency and rigor to how utilities spend ratepayer dollars on these activities, but have not been successful. These efforts would not prohibit companies from using their own resources for legislative lobbying or membership in trade organizations.

STRATEGY CATEGORY

- ○ County Strategy
- ○ Investment Opportunity
- ● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

- ● Advocate ○ Research
- ○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY

Putting this into practice

- Support efforts to advocate at the Oregon Legislature, Public Utility Commission and other venues to clarify which lobbying activities may be in the public interest, and to prohibit utilities from using ratepayer funds for activities that fall outside of that scope.
- Work with energy justice advocates and regulators to help ensure that ratepayer-funded, energy-related information from utilities provides fair consideration of an issue.

Lead Department(s)

Oregon Legislature, Oregon Public Utility Commission

Strategy: Support the development of thermal energy networks to provide energy efficient heating and cooling to buildings.

Why does this matter?

During community engagement related to the draft Climate Justice Plan, thermal energy networks were an area of shared enthusiasm between advocates, utilities, industry, and others. This new technology takes advantage of stable underground temperatures to deliver highly energy efficient building heating and cooling. The technology is not in wide use, but has been implemented elsewhere in the United States, and these systems hold promise in the Pacific Northwest. Public buildings, in particular, could be important institutional anchor tenants that may help make these projects more feasible.

Putting this into practice

- Work with energy justice advocates, industry, and utility partners to complete a feasibility analysis of potential thermal energy networks to identify project economics, energy reliability, feasible project locations and other considerations.
- Work with partners to consider a demonstration project to show a proof of concept and to identify grant money to help pay for initial planning and capital investment costs.
- Explore connecting Multnomah County owned sites to thermal energy networks as they are developed.

Lead Department(s)

Oregon Legislature; Oregon Department of Energy; Cities

STRATEGY CATEGORY

○ County Strategy
○ Investment Opportunity
● **Community Leadership**

STRATEGY TYPE

● Advocate ○ Research
○ Convene ○ Implement

COUNTY CAPACITY

○ Existing ● Additional ○ New

COUNTY CONTROL

COUNTY INFLUENCE

COUNTY PRIORITY