

Meeting Minutes

Environment and Climate Committee



CITY OF BEND

Location: Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street

Date: August 14, 2025

The meeting of the Environment and Climate Committee (ECC) was called to order at 11:02 a.m. on Thursday, August 14, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall Street, and online.

1. **Roll Call:** Amy Leedham, Kavi Chokshi, Kenneth Davies, Laura Tabor, Mark Buckley, Ray Hartwell, Robyn Breynaert, Scott Nordquist

Absent: Nick Millar, Neil Baunsgard, Rory Isbell, Madalyn Paquette (ex officio), Sasha Sulia (ex officio)

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

6/12/2025 ECC Meeting Minutes

Approved with no additions or corrections.

3. Public Comment (2 minutes each)

Visitors can use "Raise Hand" feature when prompted to provide public comment

None

4. Staff Updates | Cassie Lacy

Presented by Senior Management Analyst Cassie Lacy.

Slides included:

- **Committee member updates:**
 - Welcome 3 new members: Amy Leedham, Ken Davies, Robyn Braynaert
 - Alternates: Rebecca Kay, Wayne Morter
- **Climate Action Partner Grant Program**
 - Launched July 21

5. New Member Introductions | Cassie Lacy, Senior Management Analyst Informational

Presented by Senior Management Analyst Cassie Lacy.

ECC members introduced themselves one by one.

Chair Buckley extended an open invitation to both new and existing members to connect over coffee or informal conversations. Lacy reminded the group that any such discussions should avoid deliberation on ECC-related topics to remain compliant with public meeting laws.

6. Climate Action Partner Grant Program Update | Megan Lee, Management Analyst Informational

Presented by Management Analyst Megan Lee.

Slides included:

- **How it's going?**
 - Receiving good interest in the program!
 - Held first info session
 - Promotion through socials, local news outlets and in person events
- **What's next?**
 - August 26th info session
 - Application closing September 21st
 - Deliberation at the October ECC meeting
 - Award letters sent by October 23rd

Cassie Lacy emphasized that ECC members are expected to review all submitted applications prior to the October meeting.

Member Chokshi inquired about eligibility for nonprofit designations beyond 501(c)(3). Lacy clarified that while the program uses the term "501(c)(3)," other nonprofit designations may be considered.

Member Chokshi raised concerns that the website's language might discourage newly formed groups (e.g., Central Oregon Tool Lending Library) from applying. Lacy and Lee explained that unregistered groups must partner with an eligible entity to apply.

Member Nordquist noted that Habitat for Humanity is partnering with the Tool Lending Library for their application.

Selkirk added that funding must go to a legal entity due to liability and legal constraints.

Member Chokshi asked whether "nonprofit" and "not-for-profit" are being used interchangeably.

Selkirk confirmed they are and clarified that political organizations advocating for specific parties would not be eligible.

Member Chokshi asked if individuals with ideas aligned with CCAP actions could apply without a partner organization. Selkirk confirmed that individuals must partner with an eligible entity to be considered.

Lee thanked Member Chokshi for raising these important questions, noting that they will help improve clarity and accessibility of the program in future years.

Member Chokshi suggested tracking interest from ineligible applicants to inform future program updates. Lee agreed and committed to keeping the ECC informed.

The committee recessed at 11:30 a.m. and reconvened at 11:40 a.m.

7. Climate Fee plan Update | Cassie Lacy, Senior Management Analyst Informational

Presented by Senior Management Analyst Cassie Lacy

Slides included:

- **Work to Date**
 - June 2024: Launched electrification policy options research process
 - Dec 2024: ECC recommendation to Council about policy options to pursue: prioritize ROW restrictions, NOx regulation, or fee to electrify new development. Pursue incentives for existing buildings.
 - Feb 2025: At Council's direction, engage with BEDAB and AHAC. Staff proposal to focus on incentive creation, including investigating a fee.
 - April 2025: Present staff recommendation to Council. Council directs staff to pursue the fee option as foundational element of incentive/disincentive creation.
 - May-July 2025: Research fee policies in Ashland and other cities, determine and plan approach for fee development in Bend
- **Next Steps**
 - August 2025 (we are here): Council Work Session to share information about other cities, takeaways and proposed next steps
 - Aug – Oct 2025: Procure consultant support for fee and incentive development. Further analysis to frame and scope options for fee. Present to Council for direction Oct. 22
 - Nov 2025: Begin public meetings with joint committee and other stakeholder engagement to define fee
 - March 2026: Fee proposed
 - May 2026: Incentive program proposed
- **Scope of Policy Decisions**
 - What is the ultimate goal of the disincentive fee?
 - Raise revenue vs. drive behavior change
 - What factors should be included in our fee and how are they defined in Bend?

- Social cost of carbon, appliance-specific emissions, size of home/climate impact of home, market costs to electrify, other?
 - Defining the incentive
 - What should the funds incentivize?
 - How should it be implemented?
- **ECC Discussion**
 - Do we have 3 members who would like to volunteer to serve on the Joint Electrification Committee?

When asked which members would like to serve on the Joint Electrification Committee, Member Chokshi asked whether it would be helpful for ECC members who attended the initial joint committee meeting in February to participate, given their context.

Lacy responded that while helpful, it's not mandatory.

Member Hartwell agreed that context is helpful but not critical.

Member Breynaert asked what being on the joint committee would entail.

Lacy explained that the commitment would be similar to regular ECC meetings, with an additional monthly 2-hour meeting from November through May. The process may evolve, especially with controversial topics like electrification. Council is looking for a recommendation from the joint committee on the fee and incentive package. While ECC is tasked with this work, Council directed that the recommendation come from the joint committee. Other committees involved have their own priorities and challenges.

Members Breynaert, Leedham, Davies, Nordquist, and Hartwell expressed interest in joining the joint committee.

Member Leedham asked whether any legal challenges were identified during research and how they would be addressed.

Lacy responded that legal concerns were a major factor in staff's decision not to recommend pursuing a right-of-way ban or NOx regulation.

Selkirk added that staff is actively tracking legal developments and lawsuits. The landscape is uncertain and evolving, but the fee option appears workable. Legal challenges will be a key part of the conversation, and decisions will depend on risk tolerance.

Chair Buckley asked if ECC materials are available online for new members to review, especially regarding legal pros and cons. Lacy confirmed they are and offered to send them to new members.

Member Davies asked whether the fee would apply to developers to incentivize all-electric construction. Lacy clarified that the fee would likely take the form of a permit. If a building includes gas, the developer would pay a fee. For custom homes, the homeowner would pay directly; for subdivisions, it would be part of development costs.

Member Nordquist asked whether there would be space for adjacent conversations about making electrification easier. Lacy said nothing is currently planned, as the fee was identified as the priority. However, if specific ideas arise that don't require a full initiative, she'll consider how and when to address them.

Member Leedham suggested that if state code is a barrier, ECC could advocate through public comment.

Member Tabor noted that the fee investigation is fairly narrow—similar to Ashland's approach—and focused on disincentivizing gas appliance use rather than broader revenue generation.

Lacy confirmed that's correct. If the fee doesn't generate revenue, Council may need to decide whether to pursue additional funding to support incentives. Other cities with similar fees aren't generating significant revenue.

Chair Buckley asked whether Council has provided direction on the incentive element and use of revenue. Lacy said no, it's open-ended. Staff will provide recommendations with consultant support and input from the joint committee.

Member Hartwell noted that there's a lot of scoping to do and believes the work will be valuable.

Chair Buckley asked Member Hartwell about pushback from other committees—whether it was against the fee itself or about designing a fee compatible with all committees.

Member Hartwell shared that the joint committee meeting focused less on the fee and more on committee priorities. Development committee members expressed cost concerns, while ECC members emphasized affordability of electrification. There were disagreements on facts and priorities, but staff's recommendation was pragmatic. Each committee brought its own perspective.

Lacy added that staff's recommendation was to explore incentives that include disincentives, leaving the approach open-ended. Other committees were comfortable with that. The April Council direction to pursue a fee came after the joint meeting, so the fee itself wasn't discussed at that time.

Chair Buckley asked whether the ECC should be more proactive in communicating and coordinating with other committees, noting interest in cross-committee awareness. One suggestion was to invite AHAC or BEDAB liaisons to attend ECC meetings.

Lacy said she would consider it, while also being mindful of potential public meeting law implications.

Member Hartwell agreed it's a good idea and emphasized the importance of finding the best way to facilitate coordination between committees.

Member Tabor asked about the order of operations for developing the fee and who would be addressing the policy scoping questions.

Lacy clarified that the joint committee would primarily handle that work. Some elements may be scoped by Council, and that's expected to be discussed at the October meeting once the consultant is on board. Ultimately, some questions will be answered by Council, others by the joint committee, consultant, and staff.

Member Chokshi recalled from Member Baunsgard's report that he felt blindsided by staff direction that hadn't been discussed with ECC or other committees. That led to the second discussion where ECC decided to write a letter. He expressed enthusiasm about new members joining the process and reiterated the importance of sharing past meeting materials for context.

Lacy said she would link to the April meeting and the joint committee meeting for members to reference.

Member Chokshi also asked that the committee be mindful of acronym use, especially for new members.

Member Hartwell agreed with Member Chokshi's recollection of Member Baunsgard's report. He noted that ECC had recommended regulatory approaches, while staff leaned toward voluntary, incentive-based strategies. He believed Member Baunsgard felt staff wasn't fully aligned with ECC's recommendation.

Member Leedham asked whether market research on electrification would be included in the consultant's scope. Lacy confirmed it would, explaining that having data-informed numbers will help guide the conversation. Electrification varies case by case, and conflicting data makes it difficult to navigate without solid, localized information.

Member Hartwell added that the need for local, recent, and accurate data was raised during the joint committee meeting. Lacy agreed and said that rooting the analysis within fee development will help define costs in the most useful way.

Lacy concluded by saying she will provide another update next month after presenting to Council.

8. Invest Bend Plan Update | Mark Buckley, *Environment and Climate Committee Chair* Informational

Presented by Mark Buckley, ECC Chair

Slides included:

- **Invest Bend**
 - Bend's first Economic Development Strategic Plan
 - Presented overview April
 - Conducting 4 focus groups (two completed) – public and private representatives
 - Draft for review in September, for Council approval in December
 - Related upcoming Bend reports: State of Housing, State of the Economy, Industry Clusters
- **Invest Bend Focus Topics**

- Economic Investment and Quality of Life
- Environmental Sustainability
- Equity
- Core values – education and workforce, business-friendly environment, inclusive growth, sustainable
- Working on Vision Statement
- Data – key drivers, trends, challenges
- **ECC Opportunities**
 - Thursday 8/28 5-7:30 pm Focus Group #3
 - Provide input to me
 - 9/18 Focus Group #4, Draft Economic Development Strategic Plan for review
 - Will inform Growth Plan, Comprehensive Plan

Councilor Platt emphasized that Council is seeking direction from community experts and wants to understand what's possible locally. He encouraged policy suggestions, noting that Council's role is to make decisions based on research and recommendations—similar to the approach with the electrification fee.

Chair Buckley encouraged members to share comments on the plan with him or attend the fourth focus group meeting.

Member Tabor asked Chair Buckley about opportunities for ECC input, especially in light of lessons from Portland and changes in federal and state climate funding.

Chair Buckley responded that the conversation isn't black and white. Some fees signal the kind of growth and culture Bend wants to support. Many progressive businesses in climate tech are looking for communities aligned with their values. The goal is to design policies that are compatible with the private sector.

Member Chokshi appreciated the plan's intentionality around growth and degrowth and suggested reaching out to absent ECC members to encourage participation in the August 28 focus group.

Lacy noted that the current context is different from a year ago, and the committee can hold space to discuss broader topics, such as revenue options, even without direct Council direction. She encouraged members to suggest discussion topics. She also clarified that due to a state law, cities other than Portland cannot implement a Portland Clean Energy Fund-style program.

Chair Buckley added that with potential declines in federal funding, it's important to consider how to achieve public objectives through local mechanisms like cap-and-trade alternatives.

Member Hartwell suggested a future meeting to review recent federal and state policy changes, given how much the landscape has shifted. Lacy agreed and said it would be a great opportunity to crowdsource insights from the committee's collective expertise.

9. Agenda Review

Slides included:

- **September:**
 - Electrification Fee Update
 - Grant Program Update
 - Growth Plan/Land Use Discussion
- **October:**
 - Climate Action Partner Grant Program awards
 - October 22: Council Work Session on Electrification
- **November:**
 - ECC Meeting: TBD
 - Launch electrification fee committee

Potential Future Agenda Items:

- Review of state and federal policy landscape
 - Member Tabor offered to contribute to this discussion
 - Tentatively scheduled for November
- Meeting focused on revenue generation (after policy landscape review)
- Growth Plan presentation from Growth Management (September)

Member Chokshi requested a meeting focused on consumption-based emissions.

Chair Buckley noted that ECC previously had subcommittees aligned with CCAP focus areas and encouraged revisiting those topics when capacity allows.

Lacy agreed but noted that the subcommittee structure wasn't as effective as hoped. Instead, she encouraged members to take initiative on topics they're passionate about and propose time on future agendas to discuss them.

Member Chokshi added that while he supports electrification, it's a controversial topic. He's interested in focusing on something with broader support and cultural momentum—like consumption-based emissions.

10. Adjourned at 11:55am

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Lee
 Management Analyst - Environment, Climate & Sustainability



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