

COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHEET • RENEWABLES DEVELOPMENT

Renewable Energy Zones (REZs)

What it means when your region is declared a zone — and who decides what inside one

The key idea: planning where the megawatts go

A Renewable Energy Zone is a region a government formally declares as a preferred place for concentrated renewable generation, storage and the transmission to carry it. The logic is coordination: build many projects and the grid connection together, rather than scattering both. For residents, a declaration means your region has been chosen for a decade of development and that deserves a plain explanation.

What a declaration actually changes

A REZ is a planning and investment framework, not a single project. It typically brings coordinated transmission (the backbone the zone shares), a pipeline of generation and storage proposals seeking to connect and in some states a dedicated body managing access and community engagement. Individual projects still require their own approvals; the zone shapes *where* proposals concentrate, not *whether* each one passes.

Why zones matter to the digital economy

Concentrated clean generation is part of what attracts digital infrastructure: data centres contract the output and some will locate toward the supply. AEMO's system plan (sheet 02) leans on zones to deliver the build-out at least cost. That's the honest framing for a community weighing one: the zone is regional infrastructure for the whole economy's electrification, digital demand included.

The community deal, stated plainly

Zones concentrate impacts (turbines, panels, lines, construction traffic) in one region on behalf of a whole state. The states know it: most attach benefit-sharing arrangements, per-kilometre or per-project payments, local funds and access schemes. The details differ by state and change over time, so the questions matter more than any summary: what does *this* zone's framework promise, in writing and who checks delivery?

What good practice looks like

- The zone explained to residents as a whole program: expected projects, lines and timing, not one application at a time.
- Benefit-sharing framework published before projects arrive, with figures.
- A single, named body residents can contact about the zone overall.
- Cumulative impacts (roads, housing, landscape) assessed for the zone, not just per project.

Questions to ask

What is this zone expected to host over the next decade? What benefit-sharing applies and is it published? Who assesses cumulative impacts across projects? Where does zone-wide community input actually land?

Want to know more? Your state energy department publishes REZ declarations and frameworks; AEMO's ISP shows how zones fit the national plan. *Frameworks vary by state; check the current source.* This sheet is general information, not legal or planning advice; a specific proposal is confirmed by qualified assessment.