



EOCA represents 14 eastern and central Oregon counties, comprising a significant majority of the land within the state's borders. Our constituents face unique challenges due to the diverse and dramatic geography of the counties we represent. Together, our respective commissioners work collaboratively to advocate on behalf of those who live, learn, and work in Eastern Oregon. We aim to shape policies that recognize the needs of our region of the state and challenges we face.

Chair Marsh, Members of the House Committee on Climate Energy and Environment,

The Eastern Oregon Counties Association is opposed to HB 2816. Our counties are committed to the preservation of Eastern Oregon's resources, supporting our communities and growing our much-needed economic base. Many of our counties have struggled for decades seeing the loss of the forest-products industry, downward compression of wages, and a significant decrease in median incomes in our counties. Coupled with growing pressures to keep family farms and ranches in production, leaders in Eastern Oregon work every day to find ways to bolster our communities' resources and quality of life. The growing data center industry has been one of the spots for hope in bringing new investment to Eastern Oregon.

HB 2816 would threaten our member counties ability to leverage our unique geography and proximity to renewable power and eliminate one of the few job-growth and community building opportunities we so desperately need. Instead it appears to target data centers unnecessarily. First, as some on this committee know, Oregon has already passed an aggressive renewable energy portfolio standard, thresholds that were highly negotiated and recognized needs of Eastern Oregon's electric cooperatives and our economy. Secondly, targeting data centers fails to recognize the larger picture of any company or local region's carbon footprint and its contribution to renewable energy. Our counties function largely off hydro-power and we recruit and incentivize renewable power as well.

Finally, exclusion of data centers from the enterprise zone program isn't just counterproductive to economic development in our counties, its demeaning to our local governments. We are capable leaders and have qualified professionals who are capable of striking mutually beneficial deals to grow our communities. While we offer short-term property tax reductions for projects, including data centers, we negotiate significant benefits in return. Data center investors have helped fund schools, build parks and provide cash and capital for a variety for projects around our region. The Sage Center, for instance, a top-notch internative museum in Boardman educated kids about our region: farming, maritime and rail transportation, timber, and other industries. Allowing us to use these tools builds partnerships that have tangible and intangible benefits. Most generally, the enterprise zone tool is just a jumping off point for building deeper relationships with a variety of industries and investors. Eliminating it for these data centers sends a message to the tech community and more broadly that Oregon doesn't value these types of partnerships. For those of you involved in the current semiconductor work, you know

first-hand that we're trying as a state to play catch-up with other states. Trust our local governments to be wise stewards of our precious local tax base, and leave these decisions to us.

HB 2816 is unnecessary and undermines our efforts to rebuild our rural communities. Passing it will only increase the growing divide between our rural communities and the urban parts of the state. Please don't take away our much needed ability to bring jobs and investment to our communities.

Sincerely,

Paul Anderes,
Union County Commissioner,
Chair Eastern Oregon Counties Association