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Testimony supporting House Bill 3546

Chair Lively and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment:

As I have noted previously, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now is a grassroots climate organization of some 2,000 Southern Oregonians. We are concerned about the climate crisis and seek federal, state and local action to address it. We are rural and coastal Southern Oregonians who live on the frontlines of the warming, reducing snowpack, heatwaves, drought, rising sea level and the increasing wildfire risk that these trends conspire to impose on us. Because of our concern, we pay close attention to efforts nationally, statewide, and locally that impact our collective efforts to address the climate crisis. As our logo above indicates, the focus of SOCAN is to promote action through science.

In relation to the Data Center problem Hailstone (2024) summarizes the problem in two sentences, one introduces the problem: "Data centers have become big business thanks to the increasing role of artificial intelligence and Internet of Things systems in all our lives." while the second deals with "...concerns about just how much electricity and water is needed to keep these centers in operation, and what impact they could have in areas where resources are scarce." The appetite for power is suggested (Hailstone 2024) to be leading to a situation where: "the global data center industry will see emissions equivalent to 2.5 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide generated by the end of 2030." This, even as "the average mid-size United States data facility is 300,000 gallons of water every day, and a "staggering percentage" of these data centers are in areas with highly-stressed watersheds where demand for water [is] exceeding natural supply." Unfortunately, one outcome of the water shortage problem is that data center operators are considering more construction in norther states, such as Oregon, where water availability is greater. This, inevitably, places a burden not just on our water supply, but also on our energy grid. Meanwhile, in a discussion of what keeps data centers and their utility partners up at night, Farney (2024) reports: "The exponential growth of clean-tech manufacturing and power-hungry data centers is pushing the grid to its limits, leaving utilities and regulators scrambling for viable strategies to expand and fortify the nation's aging infrastructure."

As a first step towards addressing the problem that data centers impose on the transmission grid, HB3546 (OLIS 2025) “Directs the Public Utility Commission to provide for a classification of service for large energy use facilities. Directs the commission to require an electric company to assign the costs of serving large energy use facilities to the facilities and mitigate the risks to other classes of retail electricity consumers. Defines “large energy use facility.””

For the reasons discussed above, and because HB3546 represents a rational first step towards addressing the Data Center problem, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now endorses this bill and encourages its receiving ‘Do Pass’ recommendation.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Journet". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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#### Sources Cited

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Hailstone J 2024 What Can Be Done About Power-Hungry And Thirsty Data Centers? Forbes, Sept 13. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiehailstone/2024/09/13/what-can-be-done-about-power-hungry-and-thirsty-data-centers/>

OLIS 2025 2025 Regular Session: HB3546. Oregon Legislative Information System <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2025R1/Measures/Overview/HB3546>