

Submitter: Pat Kaczmarek
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3546

Data centers are adding millions of dollars each year in energy costs. The end use of much of these costs is to support unchecked consumerism and corporate profiteering. These centers are using precious resources that must be directed to the common good. When our utilities need to provide more energy, they have to invest money in meeting customer needs.

The demand for energy rising from data centers, has resulted in prices skyrocketing for household utility bills. Oregon households are hitting their limit with utility costs, as evidenced by our two largest electric utilities disconnecting a record-breaking nearly 58,000 households last year. HB 3546 will protect Oregonians from energy bill increases. Oregon families and small businesses should not be subsidizing the energy costs of data centers.

HB 3546 will ensure that utility costs can be tracked and billed appropriately to data centers by creating a new customer category at each for-profit electric utility. HB 3546 protects families and small businesses from paying for data center-specific costs when these high energy users are connected to the energy grid and when they add new costs to the system in the future.

HB 3546 will allow regulators to assign costs that only benefit one type of customer, and ensures that expensive data center caused utility investments are continually paid for by data centers by requiring signed utility contracts for at least 10 years.

Oregon needs to protect our energy systems as well as affordability. HB 3546 ensures that utilities can plan for how to reliably provide electricity to everyone by requiring data centers to commit to paying for minimum energy use and fines for excess energy use.

We are in a Climate Emergency. I urge the committee to support HB 3546 and vote to move this bill forward for approval in this legislative session. Now is the time to be a Climate Hero.