

Members of the Committee,

My name is Anette Hassold, I'm from House District 41 and I am here today to ask that you support the POWER Act.

As your constituent, I'm urging you to support HB 3546: Protecting Oregonians With Energy Responsibility (POWER) Act to ensure that families and small businesses do not have to continue subsidizing the energy costs for data centers. The POWER Act aims to address one of the root causes of unaffordable electricity bills, protecting Oregon families from carrying the energy costs of the wealthy tech industry.

I'm worried about skyrocketing energy prices, as energy bills have increased significantly over the last few years. Many households and neighbors are struggling to afford basic necessities. I also work at a local community college and these high rates are difficult to pay while many students are working trying to put themselves through school. These rates also disproportionately affect people who are living on limited or fixed incomes. This includes senior citizens, people with disabilities and veterans. People are having to choose between paying an electric bill, or paying for food or their medication while large energy users look the other way.

To learn that we have been helping cover the energy bills for data centers, while neighbors can barely make ends meet, is really upsetting and deeply unfair. HB 3546 would ensure that we are no longer paying for any utility investments that are only benefiting large energy users like data centers.

These large energy users need to pay their fair share. With data center demand growing exponentially, we need better guardrails to protect Oregonians from the rising energy costs data centers bring with them. Why should we be expected to subsidize data centers or other large energy users? HB 3546 would create a new customer category for data centers and similar businesses so they can be held accountable by regulators, and Oregon families can be released from this unfair arrangement.

We have seen other states struggle to meet energy needs as data centers have boomed, and this really concerns me. Oregon needs to protect our energy systems and affordability. HB 3546 would require data centers to commit to making utility investments worth it so our utilities can keep our lights on, as well as support businesses coming to Oregon.

The POWER Act protects our energy bills, holds data centers accountable, and makes our entire utility system stronger. Please vote yes on HB 3546.

-  (Signature/ printed name)