

Date: March 6 2025

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Subject: Support for HB 3546

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Levy and members of the committee:

I am writing as a representative of CEP in support of HB 3546: POWER Act. CEP serves clients on the front lines of climate change including low-income, seniors and people with disabilities. CEP offers environmental and energy education, weatherization supplies, direct home repairs, and full energy retrofits, all at no cost to our community members.

We know that far too many Oregonians from all constituencies are struggling to pay their energy bills. From 2021-now, Oregon's largest for-profit utilities have raised their rates 50%+, and one utility reported record profits in 2024. This has left far too many families in dire financial situations, or forced these families to shoulder the costs of utility business' interests or the costs of large energy users in their monthly bills.

The POWER Act (HB 3546) seeks to hold large energy users accountable for paying for their own energy needs. This bill requires state regulators to create new policies to help protect Oregon households from paying for the energy needs of data centers, cryptocurrency, and other big tech. It will also make for-profit utilities identify the costs that these large energy users are adding to the system—and make them pay their share. By creating a special category for these customers, regulators can protect Oregonians from covering the cost of these businesses.

In addition to making a special category for these customers, this bill ensures that expensive data center caused utility investments are continually paid for by data centers through requiring signed utility contracts for at least 10 years. This will ensure that they are adding some stability and strength to the energy grid by ensuring that utilities can plan for how to reliably provide electricity to everyone, including these large energy users, by requiring data centers to commit to paying for minimum energy use and fines for excess energy use.

We need data centers, cryptocurrency, and other large energy users to pay their fair share. Their demand for energy is creating greater need to invest in our energy grid but the cost is largely going to everyone else. This bill will help state regulators assign these high costs to only those customers who are making them necessary in the first place. We urge your support of HB 3546 to ensure that Oregonians are not being held responsible for incurring costs that are not their responsibility to pay for, and for a more reliable energy grid for both current and future Oregonians.

Thank you,
Greer Klepacki
Policy & Advocacy Manager
Community Energy Project