

My name is Ariel Woods. I'm a PGE customer in Portland, OR. I'm writing in support of the POWER Act.

I live in a one-bedroom apartment with my husband. We have no mechanical dishwasher, no in-unit washer and dryer. My electric bill in February 2025, for service provided in January 2025, was \$255. When I first moved into my apartment in Spring 2020, my PGE Equal Pay bill was less than \$70.

Over the last five years, my electric bill has nearly quadrupled. I have called PGE multiple times for an explanation, and they have never provided an adequate one. My most recent call to PGE was in regards to the February bill, where the employee on the other end of the line admitted that my household's electric use, year-over-year, was essentially unchanged.

I had already left PGE's Equal Pay program in July 2024 because my bill kept increasing without explanation. My last Equal Pay payment was \$183 a month, which concluded at the end of its payment schedule with a \$33 credit. This means that I was paying for more electricity than I was using, and logically, my Equal Pay payment should have gone down. It did not. It increased from \$183 to \$215 a month. So, I exited the program.

In February 2025, when I called to ask about the \$255 bill, and the PGE employee admitted that my household's electricity usage hadn't changed in five years despite my bill more than tripling in cost, I asked what else I could do to reduce my bill. I'd already tried other payment plans that should've reduced my bill and had been rejected by their low-income plan in August 2024. The PGE employee and I went over all my amenities and my usage.

He concluded that I should stop using my heat.

The employee had been informed, at the start of the call, that I was still recovering from a major surgery I'd had only a few days prior. It was February, it was freezing, and Gresham was almost immediately hit by a snowstorm soon after this call.

I was in such disbelief that I asked him to repeat himself. Was he really telling me that PGE's official advice was for their customers to stop using their heat in the middle of winter?

His answer: Yes. Yes, that was his advice as a representative of PGE.

I never received an adequate response from a PGE representative for the increase in my electricity bill. In fact, I only got an explanation from Maria Pope, PGE's CEO, when her November 27 letter written in response to Senator Ron Wyden was published by local news. She wrote:

"These customer price changes over the last five years have primarily been driven by the rising costs to purchase necessary power from the open energy market to serve customers. Like utilities nationwide, PGE is experiencing a surge in requests for new, substantial amounts of electricity load, including from advanced manufacturing, data centers and AI-related companies."

In short: my family's rates have gone up because the costs of buying power have gone up, and the costs of buying power have gone up because of a surge in energy demands from data centers owned by companies like Google and Amazon.

Oregon's own Citizens Utility Board has concluded that, without the 131 data centers now found in Oregon, PGE's burden would've shrunk. Bob Jenks, CUB's executive director, was quoted in OPB saying: "Over the last 10 years, PGE's load would've shrunk if it wasn't for the growth of this new large load. There has been growth in other customer classes, but it's been fully offset by energy efficiency investments. Historically, we've never seen a period where all the growth on a utility system was confined to a single customer group."

My family is subsidizing these data centers.

Alphabet, Google's parent company, and Amazon can afford their own electricity bills.

We cannot afford theirs.

I've been doing everything in my power to keep my family's electric bill down, and I have nothing to show for it. I have no mechanical dishwasher, no washing machine or dryer, and I have been advised by PGE to cut off my heat as well, simply so PGE can continue to provide lower rates to an industry that can afford to pay their own fair share. It is cruel. It is inhumane.

In 2024, PGE raised their rates for residential customers by 18%, their commercial customers by 14.4%, and their industrial customers by a paltry 12.5%. It is clear who PGE believes should foot the bill of their increased electrical burden.

But this isn't about PGE. This isn't even about Maria Pope.

It's about everyone paying their fair share.

My family has been robbed of our due to subsidize industrial customers' electrical loads, and we will never get that money back. We never should've been required to pay rate hike after rate hike to subsidize a trillion-dollar industry. As an energy consumer, I cannot simply change to a different energy provider like I would Internet or phone service. If PGE and other energy providers will not charge their customers fairly, then it is clear the State, in the interests of its people, must respond. That is why I am writing in support of the POWER Act.

The 131 data centers in Oregon draw more power than Parker F. Moley and Edward L. Eastham could've ever conceived when they founded PGE—then called the Willamette Falls Electric Company—at the end of the 19th century. If the growth in energy consumption is singularly found in a single customer group, as noted by CBU's executive director Bob Jenks, then it is clear regulations must catch up.

Private residents should not be required to pay Google and Amazon's electric bill for them.

Sincerely,

Ariel Woods