

Submitter: Lewis Fitzgerald Holland
On Behalf Of: Oregonians for Affordability
Committee: House Committee On Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4084

HB 4084 would function as another giveaway to the data center industry that is sucking Oregon dry. Across this state, and across party lines, Oregonians are organizing in opposition to massive data centers that are straining our energy grid, increasing costs for working Oregonians, stressing our water supplies, and gobbling up valuable farmland and industrial land, all the while providing little jobs or economic benefit.

The generous tax breaks that Oregon's enterprise zone program provide is what brought this harmful industry to Oregon in droves in the first place. This bill would expand the enterprise zone tax breaks to eight years, with even longer periods possible at the discretion of OBDD. This bill, along with SB 1586, would move the state in the opposite direction of many states that have limited tax breaks for data centers recently, and others, including Michigan, Arizona, and Maryland, that are currently taking action on this front.

This bill is ostensibly aimed at increasing our odds at reeling in advanced manufacturing jobs, including the microchip industry, that provide genuine benefits to the economy. Ironically, by expanding enterprise zone tax breaks without categorically excluding data centers from receiving them, this bill would make it harder for the state to land those high-tech jobs. Data centers have gobbled up available industrial land at the expense of industries that would actually benefit Oregonians and provide high-paying jobs. Expanding the current tax break scheme will exacerbate the problem.

If the legislature wants to incentivize advanced manufacturing companies to settle in Oregon by expanding the enterprise zone tax breaks, they should categorically exclude data centers from those benefits. Working Oregonians have faced skyrocketing utility costs driven by the data center industry, lost valuable industrial land and farmland, and, as in The Dalles, face looming water shortages from this harmful industry. As of yet, no legislative act or proposal has found a way to fully shield Oregonians from the drastic cost-of-living burdens the data center industry imposes. The only way to be on the right side of the affordability crisis is to oppose the expansion of the data center industry in Oregon – we should be shutting the door on this industry, not rolling out a bigger red carpet.

Working Oregonians will remember the legislators, across the aisle, who took this issue seriously. Please stand on the side of affordability and oppose HB 4084 as

currently written.