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On Behalf Of:
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Require Amazon to use renewable energy to power their Oregon Data Centers

An effort to compel Oregon data centers to meet the state's climate goals died in a legislative committee earlier this month (4/3), a victory for big tech companies and for small-town officials who felt House Bill 2816 could undermine one of their fastest-growing industries. It would have required Amazon to actively seek renewable energy to power its current and proposed data centers, which they now don't have to do. Given the huge amount of energy that data centers use, and the resources available to big companies like Amazon, Oregon should make sure tax break recipients aren't working against the state's climate goals.

Amazon said it will pursue renewable natural gas or other energy sources with a lower carbon footprint to power the fuel cells. For now, it plans to tap into a controversial pipeline bringing natural gas from British Columbia. Tapping into Canadian fracked gas does NOT mediate Climate Change - it promotes it through the release of methane gas from the British Columbia wellhead all the way to its end use in Oregon.

In a new filing with state regulators, Bloom Energy, the company providing Amazon's fuel cells, says the fuel cells would add 24 megawatts of electricity to a Morrow County data center that currently has just 40 megawatts of power available. There are 2,500 megawatts of renewable energy waiting to come online in the region, according to Bloom, but a transmission bottleneck will constrain access to that power for "several years." One key transmission line to Boardman is at least three years away from starting construction, according to Bloom, and will take at least four years to build.

Oregon law requires Amazon to demonstrate that it has assessed alternative power sources with lower carbon footprints before installing the fuel cells. Bloom's filing fails to show Amazon has done that. I strongly believe that Amazon should give thorough consideration to developing or investing in renewable energy as other tech companies have done in Oregon, and Amazon itself has done in Virginia.