



May 5, 2025

Testimony Opposing HB 3546

Josh Tompkins, Chair, Public Policy Committee, Washington County Chamber of Commerce

Submitted to the Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My Josh Tompkins, and I serve as Chair of the Public Policy Committee for the Washington County Chamber of Commerce.

Our Chamber represents more than 800 member businesses that collectively support over 90,000 jobs across the region. We serve a diverse and dynamic business community—anchored by some of the world’s most innovative companies in the semiconductor, biotechnology, and technology sectors. Together, they form the backbone of Oregon’s globally recognized Silicon Forest.

Much of the groundbreaking research, data processing, and product development that defines our region depends on one thing: reliable, high-performance data centers. Some of the most cutting-edge work is happening within these facilities themselves. Washington County attracts these data centers because of our robust infrastructure—including the Transpacific Cable—and the reliability and speed it offers.

Let me be clear: we support the intent behind HB 3546. Ensuring that electricity costs are not unfairly passed on to residential ratepayers is a goal we share. But the method proposed in this bill is concerning. By singling out data centers for a new, separate rate class, HB 3546 sends a message—intentional or not—that these facilities are bad actors and not welcome in Oregon. That message is inconsistent with the role data centers play in driving our economy.

Data centers don’t just power our online lives—they power jobs, property tax revenues, and economic development. These are capital-intensive projects that support skilled labor, family-wage employment, and local government services. The construction phase alone creates demand for contractors, electricians, engineers, and service providers across multiple sectors.

If HB 3546 moves forward, we risk pushing billions of dollars in potential future investment to other states that are already aggressively courting this industry. States like Arizona, Utah, and Texas are ready and willing to provide a more predictable and welcoming environment. Oregon cannot afford to lose its competitive edge in a sector that supports so much of our innovative economy.

This bill doesn’t just affect data centers—it affects every business and worker that benefits from the infrastructure, jobs, and economic activity they create. And frankly, it affects our ability to continue growing the ecosystem that makes Oregon a global hub for high-tech excellence.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to not move HB 3546 forward as currently written. Instead, we ask you to engage with industry stakeholders to find a more balanced, constructive path forward—one that protects ratepayers without jeopardizing Oregon’s standing as a leader in technology and innovation.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration.