



OREGON CUB
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MEET CUB'S COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

DAVID BELTRÁN BARAJAS

David joined CUB this January as our new Community Organizer. Coming from a working-class immigrant household, he's taken to community organizing as a way to fight for impacted communities in Nevada, and now Oregon.

David has 6 years of organizing experience with a background in Immigrant Rights and other issues. David finds joy in building and sharing with his communities, having also worked on various mutual aid projects addressing food and housing insecurity in his community.

David is here to help CUB members who want to get more involved and support our advocacy efforts.



Email outreach@oregoncub.org or call 503-227-1984
to schedule a one-on-one meeting with David!



THE BEAR
FACTS
SPRING 2025



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE OREGON
CITIZENS' UTILITY BOARD

THE BEAR
FACTS
SPRING 2025

DEAR CUB MEMBERS

As spring is beginning, I like to reflect on the things in life I am grateful for. My garden is beginning to wake up. Oregonians have been showing up and speaking out for their values in droves. The CUB team has been more motivated than ever. And our members -- you -- have been generous with your time and resources in the face of mounting challenges.

I am grateful that our state lawmakers are listening to everyone struggling to afford utility bills. This year, we have a huge number of bills slated to address our energy systems' impacts on customers. **CUB's priority in this session is energy affordability**, with the POWER Act (HB 3546) and the FAIR Energy Act (HB 3179) taking the lead.

I am grateful for our team of advocates and analysts for **taking on the mounting threat of data centers on Oregon's energy system**. As Oregon's utility watchdog, we are tasked with using keen analysis to address problems on the horizon.

And I am grateful for you. Your donations, voice, passion, and time are what make this work possible. Whether you're donating monthly or emailing legislators on CUB bills, your commitment to our advocacy empowers us to keep pushing for a better future.

Thank you for your tireless support of our work to make utilities affordable, accessible, reliable, and clean.



Bob Jenks

Bob Jenks
Executive Director, Oregon CUB

UTILITY DISCONNECTIONS SKYROCKETED IN 2024

The three largest utilities (PGE, Pacific Power, and NW Natural) disconnected nearly 67,000 households in 2024. **That's an estimated 167,400 Oregonians who were shut off because they could not afford their energy bills.**

Customers have hit their limit on how much energy bills can keep increasing

In 2024, the largest utilities shut off more people than ever reported for non-payment on record since reporting began in 2018. **Rates for these utilities have gone up 50% in the last four years.** It's clear that too many are struggling to keep up with rising energy costs.

Many families were spared from disconnection. CUB helped secure new emergency protections that put a pause on shutoffs for everyone enrolled in the income-qualified bill discount programs for PGE and Pacific Power from December 2024 through March 2025.





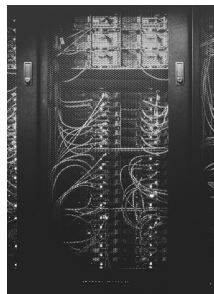
MAKING UTILITIES
AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE,
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THE BEAR
FACTS

2025 OREGON LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2025 session is in full swing at the Oregon State Legislature!

Energy Affordability is CUB's top priority in 2025. We're working on passing legislation as a statewide solution to the energy affordability crisis.



POWER ACT (HB 3546)

The demand for energy is growing rapidly in Oregon—**mainly from data centers and other big tech**. This mass influx of very large energy users is putting a strain on our energy system and driving up costs for everyone. We're already seeing the impact of large energy users not paying their share. We need data centers, cryptocurrency, and other large energy users to pay their fair share.

The **POWER Act (HB 3546)** seeks to hold large energy users accountable for paying for their own energy needs. By creating a new customer category for data centers, regulators can protect Oregonian's energy bills from data center costs. 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.

FAIR ENERGY ACT (HB 3179)

Too many people are struggling to pay their energy bills. Oregon's largest utilities have raised billing rates by nearly 50% since 2021. While some assistance programs are available, these alone are not enough to keep up with the needs of utility customers. This bill works to change the priorities of for-profit utilities and state regulators to center consumer affordability.

The **FAIR Energy Act (HB 3179)** empowers state regulators to set energy billing rates at the lowest possible level. The bill also will move any increases out of winter, when energy usage is highest. Utilities will have more flexibility to use low-cost financing for important investments in the grid to keep customer impacts low. The bill will increase transparency so that consumers know what they are paying for and what to expect from any changes in energy bills.



COMMUNITY TESTIMONY: FAIR ENERGY ACT

I support HB 3179, because it would give me economic stability not to have a rate increase less than one and a half years after the last increase.

With food and rent going up, and everything else in my life, ensuring that utilities can't raise my bills each year would help my family, and the families of many people across Oregon.

- ROGELIA MARTINEZ PEREZ
COMMUNITY MEMBER

I support HB 3179 because it ensures that rates do not go up more than once every year and a half.

Right now with the way things are, it's very difficult to budget every month, and I'm afraid that I'll be disconnected.

- SOLEDAD MARTINEZ
COMMUNITY MEMBER



MAKING UTILITIES
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WHO IS DRIVING INCREASED ENERGY DEMAND? DATA CENTERS



Demand for Energy is Growing in Oregon

Over the past decade, we've seen a growing demand for energy in Oregon. No, it's not people moving here or leaving too many lights on—it's **data centers that are straining our energy grid**. This influx of energy demand from just a few large customers is creating a lot of need to change our energy system. But when the companies that are creating the need for these expenses don't pay their fair share, **we do**.

We Need Better Guardrails to Protect Oregonians

We have never seen anything like data centers. They can build a facility in a matter of months. **A data center uses more electricity than the City of Ashland.** And as AI data centers come into the state, they will use more electricity than the City of Eugene. It is going to require a large, quick build out of our electric grid to serve them and that will cost a lot of money.

DATA CENTER LOAD GROWTH

PGE'S SYSTEM: 2019-2024

Equivalent of
406,000 People
(162,400
Customers)

Data Centers' growth for PGE
over the last 5 years is the
equivalent of adding 406,000
people to PGE's system

People Added to PGE's System
2019-2024
60,800 People (24,300 Customers)

BILLING RATE INCREASES

PGE'S SYSTEM: 2015-2024

LARGE INDUSTRIAL
(Data centers' current class)
Up 2.08 cents/kWh

HOUSEHOLDS
Up 7.63
cents/kWh

We need data centers, cryptocurrency, and other large energy users to pay their fair share. Their demand for energy is creating a greater need to invest in our energy grid but the cost is largely going to everyone else. CUB is working to ensure that these high costs to only those customers who are making them necessary in the first place. We're advocating at the Public Utility Commission and the Oregon Legislature to protect Oregonians' energy bills.

NW NATURAL & AVISTA ASK FOR 7% RATE INCREASE

Avista Utilities (Gas)

Avista is asking to increase billing rates by **7%** for its household gas customers in Southern and Eastern Oregon. If approved, any changes would go into effect September 1, 2025.

Why Avista Wants to Raise Rates

- **Investments:** replacing old pipes, new customer connections, general system maintenance
- **Higher Profits:** increasing how much the company can earn for investors
- **Inflation:** higher material and labor costs

Average households could see ~\$130 winter bills.

NW Natural (Gas)

NW Natural is asking to increase billing rates by **7%** for its household gas customers in Western Oregon. If approved, any changes would go into effect November 1, 2025.

Why NW Natural Wants to Raise Rates

- **Investments:** replacing old gas storage infrastructure, updating pipes, modernizing IT
- **Higher Profits:** increasing how much the company can earn for investors
- **Inflation:** higher material and labor costs

Average households could see ~\$140 winter bills.