



April 15, 2026

DELIVERED VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Cameron Henry
President of the Louisiana State Senate
900 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

The Honorable Beth Mizell
Chair of the Senate Committee on Commerce,
Consumer Protection and International Affairs
900 North Third Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

RE: Please Support Senate Bill 490

Dear President Henry, Chairwoman Mizell, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Pelican Institute for Public Policy, I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 490, sponsored by Senator Bob Hensgens, which creates a parallel, market-driven pathway that allows large load energy users to meet their own needs without distorting the existing regulatory framework or shifting unnecessary costs and risks onto families and small businesses.

As highlighted in Pelican's [Roadmap to Unlocking Louisiana's Energy Abundance](#), expanding market competition and removing unnecessary regulatory barriers are essential to maintaining affordable, reliable energy.

SB 490 advances those goals in a targeted and responsible way. It does not dismantle the existing regulatory structure or impose broad deregulation. Instead, it creates a limited, well-defined option for private investment to meet new demand efficiently. It encourages innovation, accelerates project timelines, and ensures that those who benefit from large-scale energy investments bear the associated costs.

Most importantly, it protects Louisiana families.

While our state historically enjoyed some of the lowest electricity rates in the country, recent data show that trend is changing quickly:

- A March 2026 Pelican [poll](#) found that 66% of Louisiana voters experienced increases in their electricity or gas bills over the past year.
- Public filings [show](#) base rates for most residential customers in Louisiana increased by over 30 percent between 2019 and 2024.
- Federal data [show](#) average retail electricity prices rose 14.1% from 2024 to 2025, more than double the national rate.

In addition, state-regulated utilities are currently pursuing [major capital expenditures](#) totaling over \$8.5 billion, most of which are unrelated to the recent AI data center boom. If all the proposals and associated rate increases are approved, it is [estimated](#) that base rates for electricity could climb another 40% by 2030. These trends point to a clear inflection point, which SB 490 can help address.

Electricity prices are not the result of distant forces beyond our control. They are shaped by policy and regulatory decisions that determine what infrastructure is built, how it is procured, how costs are allocated, and who bears responsibility for long-term risk when economic conditions change.

By allowing private capital to meet new demand from large load energy users, SB 490 reduces pressure on the public grid, limits cost-shifting, and protects captive Louisiana ratepayers. It is a practical step toward a more flexible, resilient, and consumer-focused energy framework.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our views on this important issue. Please join us in supporting market-driven reforms to keep Louisiana's electricity prices in check, and vote "YES" on SB 490.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Landry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa Landry

Director, Center for Energy

Pelican Institute for Public Policy