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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OMA Warns Utility Forecasts Are Driving Up Ohio Electric Bills

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Ohio manufacturers are paying higher electricity bills today based on predictions of future demand that may never materialize, Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) President Ryan Augsburger warned Friday during a pointed discussion at The City Club of Cleveland.

Appearing alongside representatives of FirstEnergy and the Ohio Business Roundtable, Augsburger challenged utility forecasting practices that he said are inflating electricity costs, encouraging unnecessary infrastructure spending and shifting financial risks onto manufacturers, businesses and households.

"We can't compete as a manufacturing state if we don't have affordable and reliable power," Augsburger said. "Manufacturers are having to pay power bills that they didn't budget for last year."

The dispute centered on how utilities forecast future electricity demand, particularly from proposed data centers. Augsburger argued that speculative projects are being counted before their actual power requirements are established, creating an exaggerated picture of future electricity shortages.

Those forecasts have immediate financial consequences. PJM's independent market monitor reported earlier this year that projected demand from data centers that have not yet been built contributed approximately \$21.3 billion in capacity costs over three years, compared with \$1.8 billion attributable to operating data centers.

"The forecasts are overstating prospective, speculative future load," Augsburger said. "It creates an appearance of scarcity in the market."

Augsburger also described OMA's examination of utility forecasts that appear to count the same prospective electricity demand multiple times, potentially magnifying the need for costly transmission infrastructure.

He warned that these forecasting practices have real financial consequences for manufacturers, businesses and households already struggling with rising electricity costs.

"The forecasting is opening the door for customer overcharging," Augsburger said.

The discussion exposed a fundamental disagreement over who should pay when anticipated

projects fail to materialize. FirstEnergy pointed to contractual commitments and financial safeguards for large electricity users. Augsburger countered that existing tariffs do not sufficiently protect current customers from costs that can be shifted onto their bills over time.

OMA has consistently advocated stronger financial commitments from large electricity users, including requiring developers to fund necessary infrastructure upgrades up front rather than leaving existing customers exposed if projects are delayed, downsized or abandoned.

Augsburger emphasized that OMA supports economic development, new generation and competitive electricity markets. But Ohio cannot strengthen its manufacturing economy by making existing employers absorb the costs of speculative growth.

Ohio's electricity policies must distinguish between genuine demand and projections that have not been adequately verified, he argued, while ensuring those creating new infrastructure costs are responsible for paying them.

"Costs must be paid by the cost causer," Augsburger said.

Ohio manufacturers are already paying for electricity demand that exists only on paper. Augsburger warned that without greater scrutiny of utility forecasts and stronger protections against cost shifting, existing customers will continue to shoulder the financial risks of projects they neither proposed nor control.

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The Ohio Manufacturers' Association is Ohio's largest statewide business association composed solely of manufacturers. Established in 1910, the OMA's mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. It represents manufacturers of all sizes in every subsector of the industry. Manufacturing is Ohio's largest economic sector, employing approximately 690,000 Ohioans and contributing more than \$138 billion annually to the economy. Visit ohiomfg.com, or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

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