

Testimony of Peter Bergel on HB 2215

Before the House Climate, Energy and Environment Committee

February 13, 2023

Good afternoon Madam Chair and Members of the Committee.

My name is Peter Bergel. I live at 1850 Saginaw St. S. in Salem, Oregon. I was the co-author and Campaign Director of 1980's ballot measure 7, the initiative ballot measure that put in place the sensible requirements regarding nuclear power development in Oregon that HB 2215 seeks to remove.

Our group's polling in 1979 showed that the people of Oregon wanted two things: a solution to the nuclear waste problem before making any more of it, and to be consulted about further construction of nuclear power plants even if an operating federal waste repository existed.

Our campaign to place our measure on the ballot was conducted entirely with volunteers. We had NO paid signature collectors.

Once on the ballot, our campaign spent approximately \$30,000 while our opposition spent \$660,000 (which was a lot in 1980). That is, we were outspent more than 20:1, but our measure still passed, indicating the level of conviction felt by the public.

Concern about nuclear waste that will be dangerous for quarter of a million years was the primary motivator for our measure, and voters' primary concern about nuclear power.

The industry has always claimed that this problem is either solved, will be solved soon, or can be gotten around. For 70 years we have seen this not to be true.

The concern that voters expressed by passing ballot measure 7 in 1980 remains just as valid today: there is still no known way to prevent nuclear waste from harming people and the environment for the timespan during which it will remain deadly – a timespan far longer than recorded history.

HB 2215 is an attempt to deprive Oregonians of the protection against nuclear waste that they voted for without dealing with that pernicious problem. Our ballot measure has protected them now for 43 years.

Likewise, HB 2215 seeks to deprive Oregonians of a voice in deciding whether or not to undertake the risks that nuclear power inevitably presents. These include risk of exposure to radiation, risk of catastrophic accident, risk of higher electric bills and risk that money desperately needed to advance safer, cheaper alternatives will be squandered on a moribund technology.

For all these reasons, I call upon you, members of this committee, to vote **NO** on HB 2215.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.