

To: Pam Marsh, Chair and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment.

From: Regna Merritt and Thomas Ward, MD

On Behalf of Regna Merritt and Thomas Ward, MD

Re: Testimony HB 2215

Date: 13 February 2023

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure: HB2215

Dear Chair Marsh and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify **Our family strongly opposes HB 2215 and we request that you do the same.** Please consider:

- **Water quantity and quality:** Where will the water needed to operate the system(s) come from? How much will be/could be required? Who could lose access to water for irrigation, for fish, for domestic use, for ranching? Where could above-ground streams and below-ground aquifers be polluted - and for how long? Who would pay for replacement and remediation?
- **Environmental Justice:** Nuclear energy is extractive energy, and not part of a just transition. The vast majority of uranium mining in the US and around the world has been done on Indigenous land with Indigenous communities suffering from the health impacts. We know that it is indigenous and aboriginal peoples who have experienced more than their fair share of the harms of contamination from nuclear waste and uranium mining, such as the Navajo Nation when the Church Rock uranium mill spill of 1979 contaminated the Puerco River. Nuclear production and waste storage often occurs near low-income communities and communities of color. Nuclear energy is a false solution to the climate crisis.
- **Too Expensive:** Nuclear Reactors, including Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMNRs) are prohibitively expensive and take enormous amounts of money away from proven, cost-effective clean energy sources such as solar and wind.

- Creates Radioactive Waste: the U.S. still doesn't have a site for safe disposal of nuclear waste and will not for the foreseeable future. SMNRs create more radioactive waste per kilowatt of electricity generated than conventional nuclear reactors. Many Oregon communities are downriver from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the most toxic clean up site in the Western hemisphere, thanks to nuclear waste. The last thing we need to do is create more of this waste here in Oregon.
- Safety: All reactors are prone to accidents and disasters, like Fukushima in 2011. It's not worth the safety risk.

Please DO NOT harm our low income and communities of color. DO NOT harm our water. DO NOT turn Oregon into a nuclear waste dump.

Thank you for your consideration,

Regna Merritt (retired Physician Assistant)

Thomas Ward, MD