

Submitter: Trygve Steen

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB4090

House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water Committee,  
Chair Ken Helm and Members:

Thank you for taking this testimony about rejecting HB 4090 and  
in support of Amendment HB 4090 - 3, if you decide to go forward with HB 4090.

I am Trygve Steen, a resident of Portland. I bring to this issue deep experience on  
the implications of this legislation because of over 45 years teaching courses focused  
on Sustainability in relation to how we take environmentally related actions.

HB 4090 would allow a major exception for nuclear power plants to be constructed on  
federal lands within the state of Oregon in spite of the law enacted by the people of  
Oregon via the initiative process in 1980. Very importantly, that initiative required two  
conditions to be met before a nuclear power plant could be built in the state of  
Oregon: 1) a federally approved nuclear waste repository must exist for disposal of  
high level radioactive waste and 2) there must be a statewide vote approving building  
of a nuclear power plant in Oregon. HB 4090 is a blatant end-run of these vitally  
important requirements and does not deserve to be seriously considered.

Amendment HB 4090-3 is at least a step to reduce the adverse impact of HB 4090.

For decades, I taught the essential importance of the Precautionary Principle to guide  
our actions for relating to the environment in a responsible manner. The essential  
features of the Precautionary Principle are - - “ taking preventive action in the face of  
uncertainty; shifting the burden of proof to the proponents of an activity; exploring a  
wide range of alternatives to possibly harmful actions; and increasing public  
participation in decision making.” (Environ Health Perspect. 2001 Sep; 109(9): 871–  
876.)

The initiative process in 1980 honored the above principles. HB 4090 profoundly  
violates these concepts. I therefore strongly urge rejection of HB 4090 based on its  
features dealing with Nuclear Power. In addition, the general implications of HB 4090  
for energy facility siting in Oregon are seriously damaging as well. The existing  
authority of the state Energy Facility Siting Council is already working quite well and  
should not be abandoned.

Thanks for your attention to my message,

Trygve Steen, Ph.D.  
Professor of Environmental Science (retired)