

HB 2038 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Prepared By: Erin Pischke, LPRO Analyst

Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure requires the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to study particular aspects of nuclear energy and submit a report by September 15, 2026. It sunsets the study and reporting requirements on January 2, 2027.

Detailed summary:

Requires the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to study the following subjects as related to nuclear energy, including nuclear waste disposal from nuclear energy:

- Advantages of nuclear energy;
- Feasibility of constructing nuclear power plants in Oregon;
- How the use of nuclear energy may support current energy systems;
- Economic growth and workforce development potential for Oregon communities;
- Safety of nuclear energy and nuclear waste disposal;
- Reliability of nuclear energy;
- How the use of locally produced nuclear energy can eliminate dependence on foreign-sourced energy; and
- Use of thorium as an option for producing nuclear energy.

Requires ODOE to submit a report with potential recommendations for legislation to the interim committee of the House of Representatives on Climate, Energy, and Environment no later than September 15, 2026. Sunsets the study and reporting requirements on January 2, 2027.

- *FISCAL: May have fiscal impact, but no statement issued yet*
- *REVENUE: May have revenue impact, but no statement issued yet*

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Nuclear reactors generate electricity when thermal energy is released from the fission of nuclear fuel. According to the Oregon Department of Energy, the Columbia Generating Station in Washington State provides Oregon's nuclear power and the Bonneville Power Administration markets the electricity it produces. In 2004, Portland General Electric decommissioned its 1,130-megawatt Trojan nuclear-fueled power plant located in Columbia County.

Oregon's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) may issue site certificates for nuclear-fueled thermal power plants, but only after finding that an adequate repository for the disposal of the high-level radioactive waste produced by the plant has been licensed to operate by the appropriate agency of the federal government (ORS 469.595). If an adequate repository exists and is licensed, the nuclear-fueled thermal power plant site certificate proposal must be approved or rejected by Oregon voters at the next available statewide general election (ORS 469.597).