

SB 215 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

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Meeting Dates: 3/5

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Repeals the requirement that there be a licensed repository for the disposal of high-level radioactive waste before a site certificate for a nuclear-fueled thermal power plant may be issued. Repeals the requirement that a proposed site certificate for a nuclear-fueled thermal power plant be submitted to the electors of this state for their approval or rejection. Refers the Act to the people for their approval or rejection at the next regular general election.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 Replaces measure. Defines "small modular reactor energy facility" as an energy facility that produces power from using one or more small modular reactors at a certain site. Exempts small modular reactor energy facility from certain statutes related to siting of nuclear-fueled thermal power plants (ORS 469.595, 469.597, and 469.599). Requires Act be submitted to people for approval or rejection at the next statewide regular general election.

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).