

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy, & the Environment  
 Re: HB 2038  
 Date: 2-24-2025

Greetings Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair B. Levy, and Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist with a career in public health. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and the Stop Nuclear Working Group Coalition. I am opposed to HB 2038 for the reasons that I will list below and I ask you to reject HB 2038. Please do not give it a work session; please do not pass it out of Committee.

My concerns, based on a commitment to the health and well being of Oregon and its people, are as follows:

This bill would spend scarce public dollars on a study that is designed to be biased by its directive: HB 2038 first directs the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to study and report to the legislature the advantages of nuclear energy, thus biasing the direction to ODOE. The report could result in a failure to find and fully describe disadvantages. The study could thus be subject to challenge. The bill does not mention the need to describe the disadvantages, that are known to be many, and that greatly outweigh any advantages. Those disadvantages are:

There is no permanent nuclear waste disposal site and the waste remains deadly for thousands of years, subject to releases and contamination of the environment, and causing harm to human and ecosystem health.

Nuclear power is not a solution to climate disruption as it is not clean energy (examine the entire life cycle). Fossil fuels are intensively used during mining, milling, processing, and transportation of uranium for fuel, and during building of power plants and decommissioning. Fossil fuels are needed to supply energy during the long wait from conception to production: it takes an average of 10-20 years from design to operation of nuclear power plants in the US.

Nuclear power is not a solution to climate disruption as it takes too long to build to reduce Green House Gas emissions. We need to slow planet warming now! WE ARE IN A CLIMATE EMERGENCY!!

Nuclear power is extremely expensive and the cost is left to ratepayers and tax payers, not the utilities or the high-tech corporations receiving government subsidies and tax credits to build them. Because of known dangers, nuclear power plants will not be fully insurable by any but the government (taxpayers).

Do not believe the hype from the nuclear industry and billionaires wishing to build SMNRs. Nuclear power does not stay on-line continuously. Down-times for maintenance and malfunction frequently extend for months.

Small modular nuclear reactors (SMNRs) are not small even as single modules and they are meant to be combined with several modules. Together they will produce as much or more nuclear waste as current traditional operating nuclear power plants. And, as mentioned above, the waste needs to be "managed" and "isolated" for thousands of years.

Aside from the waste issues, nuclear fuel proposed to be used by some models of SMNRs is refined or processed to near- "weapons grade" material. Its use and existence adds significantly to risks of nuclear weapons proliferation, and can make nuclear plants targets for terrorism.

This proposed study by the ODOE is a waste of our money. Oregonians strongly support the 1980 ballot measure and will rightly employ all tools at our disposal to maintain it and the protections it affords our health and safety.

My last concern: Do we have a budget surplus this biennium? No!

Please let's spend our scarce resources on applying real solutions to our climate crisis. Nuclear power is a dangerous and false solution that would delay us from using known and effective ways to address the crisis we face.

Thank you for your time and attention.

