

Submitter: Joyce Follingstad
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2410

WRITTEN COMMENTS TO OPPOSE HB2410 REGARDING SMALL MODULAR NUCLEAR REACTORS IN OR.

I am Dr. Joyce Follingstad, psychologist, nurse and cancer survivor. I am writing in opposition to HB 2038, that promotes moving forward with Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMNR). I joined the people of Oregon in 1980 who spoke out with their vote against any future nuclear power plants in Oregon, unless the people of Oregon vote for a nuclear power plant and unless a high level nuclear waste repository has been built and is federally licensed and operating, which, to date, has not occurred.

I strongly oppose HB 2410, as it is unlawful to do an end run around Oregon's 1980 Ballot Measure Law, giving only the people of Umatilla County the right to vote. Yet, an SMNR in Umatilla County would effect the whole state, whether putting Oregonians at risk from the transportation of nuclear materials by rail or by road, or putting us at risk from radiation releases or accidents. It would also bring harm to our Columbia River by changing water temperatures or by radioactive releases.

It is destructive in many ways, to continue producing electricity from nuclear power plants of any size including the production of the outrageously toxic radioactive wastes. It is destructive of our environment and to our indigenous communities as we already have over 15,000 uranium mines, mostly on native lands. Nuclear power uses much needed water and returns it at high temperatures to our rivers, killing fish.

Nuclear power is destructive to the our health, causing numerous cancers and early deaths. Our country bears a heavy health burden, as one in two men and one in three women will now get cancer in their lifetime. The radiation that we now have in our everyday lives exceeded the recommended amount considered safe for the average male, so the recommended amount has now simply been raised, putting us all at greater risk for cancers!

Even a small meltdown would be catastrophic. We citizens cannot insure our bodies or property against nuclear accidents. Living in a state that is overdue for a level 9 earthquake, sets us up for a meltdown. An SMNR may only need a 20 acre footprint, but do you want it built next to you or your family? And how many square miles are needed for the evacuation zone? Inevitably, nuclear materials will endanger citizens by truck accidents, train derailments, forest fires or other natural disasters.

Nuclear power is also economically destructive. Nuclear plants routinely cost much more than projected. One plant in Japan cost 9 billion, ran for one day and was permanently shut down. Some plants in the US are being closed permanently because the electricity produced is more expensive than the alternatives that are now available. The only functioning nuclear power plant in Washington State is running at a financial deficit. In addition, since no one wants to insure nuclear power plants, the government subsidizes them by insuring them with our taxpayer money!

Nuclear power is NOT an answer to the climate crisis. Any nuclear plants started now would take up to a decade to be built and operational. The mining operations and transportation of nuclear fuels uses huge amounts of fossil fuels. Wind and solar renewable power are cheaper, well-developed and can be implemented quickly, at a much lower cost!

It is reckless to put aside the will of the people for an idea for which there is not even a working model! It is my understanding that the type of fuel needed for SMNRs is only available at present from Russia. We learned from our experience with Trojan to not depend on nuclear for our electricity, as it was down for repairs more often than it was up and producing electricity. There were no blackouts when it was off line, so we learned that we could do better without it!

I ask you to PLEASE oppose HB 2410!