Generation Atomic
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February 25th, 2025

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment,

We at Generation Atomic write to express our strong support for House Bill 2410, which would permit a small modular reactor (SMR) demonstration project in Umatilla County. The passage of this bill would represent a critical step forward for Oregon's energy future.

Building the proposed demonstration project would better position Oregon to meet its clean energy goals. While the State has a rich history of hydroelectric power generation, abnormally dry weather, and drought in recent years have reduced in-state hydroelectric generation by more than half in three of the past five years. At the same time, natural gas use has risen, and now fuels 38% of Oregon's electricity generation, a significant increase from a decade ago. Oregon's aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050 will be extremely difficult without exploring all carbon-free energy options, including nuclear. As a state with significant energy needs, Oregon requires carbon-free energy solutions that maintain quality of life while protecting the environment.

Energy demand in Oregon is growing faster than anticipated, placing more stress on the already stretched grid. The Western Electricity Coordinating Council has found that new data centers are becoming an "emerging risk" to electrical grid reliability. Oregon's data center market is the fifth largest in the nation, and demand for electricity in the West is projected to increase approximately 17% by 2033—twice what was predicted the previous year. With the projection of more data centers and electricity-demanding infrastructure planned for Oregon’s future, large-scale solutions are needed to meet this demand. Nuclear energy, with the highest capacity factor of any energy source- can help to accomplish this.

Since Oregon's nuclear moratorium was enacted in 1980, nuclear technologies have evolved significantly. Many of today's advanced reactor designs offer promising improvements, including

enhanced safety features, reduced waste production, and improved economics compared to previous generations. Most small modular reactor designs also incorporate passive safety systems that could automatically shut down without operator intervention or external power. These designs propose modular construction techniques that would allow reactors to be partially assembled in factories and completed on-site, potentially reducing construction time and mitigating the cost overruns that plagued earlier nuclear projects.

Recognizing that meeting ambitious climate goals requires all carbon-free energy sources, many States across the country, including Illinois, West Virginia, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Montana, and Illinois have recently moved to lift their own restrictions on new nuclear development.. Oregon should join these forward-thinking states by allowing this demonstration project to proceed.

It is for these reasons that we encourage the passage of HB 2410 out of the House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment. This bill represents a timely opportunity for Oregon to explore how advanced nuclear technology can best help provide the reliable, carbon-free power needed to meet our state's 21st-century clean energy goals.

Sincerely,

Eric Meyer	Madison Schroder	Philip Hult
Executive Director	Policy Coordinator	Development Director
Generation Atomic	Generation Atomic	Generation Atomic