

2/23/2025:

Recommend enactment of Oregon HB 2410

My background is primarily in investment management, including energy industry analysis, and consulting.

I am a lifelong Oregon resident who is an enthusiastic advocate for modern nuclear power technology, particularly small modular technology. With unprecedented increasing energy demands from growth in data centers, quantum computing, semi-conductor manufacturing and AI, it is increasingly being recognized throughout the country that new nuclear power technology is the most promising energy source that can be leveraged to society's advantage in our evolving economic environment. Nuclear power is eco-friendly since it emits no greenhouse gases and does not negatively contribute to climate change. In addition, nuclear is non-intermittent, scalable, and incredibly efficient.

An example of resurgent interest in nuclear power development was recently demonstrated when Google announced that it will finance the construction of seven small nuclear reactors in the U.S. These plants will be built by energy start-up Kairos Power. The agreement will provide 500 megawatts of clean, reliable electricity to feed Google's growing need for data centers.

This Google development follows on the September 20th 2023 announcement by Microsoft and Constellation Energy that the Unit 1 nuclear reactor at Three Mile Island Generating Station will be re-started and Microsoft will buy all the output.

Unfortunately, Oregon has a history of resistance to and even hostility toward nuclear power to the extent that a ban on nuclear plant construction was instituted soon after The Trojan Nuclear Power Plant in Oregon was decommissioned back in 2004. Those were different times with older nuclear technology---not the safe scalable nuclear power sources that we currently have access to.

Combining increasing energy demands with the long-term nuclear power ban, and additional restrictions on coal and natural gas introduced in 2021 has placed Oregon in a precarious position. The entire state of Oregon is faced with the sobering reality of real potential rolling blackouts in both cold winter and hot summer weather conditions that other states have experienced in recent years.

Oregon HB 2410 provides a prudent first step toward recognizing nuclear power's ability to provide one meaningful source of relief from these threats. By reintroducing nuclear power on a small scale under Oregon HB 2410, we can test out this promising energy source in Oregon's environment in the form of a small modular reactor energy facility demonstration project.

Rigorous safety protocols are also being incorporated into this project that requires the demonstration project to use microgrid enabling technologies such that the project can be isolated from the electric grid and further support community energy resilience. This project also has the enthusiastic support of residents of Umatilla County.

I urge the Oregon State Legislature to enact Oregon HB 2410 into law as a first step in broadening Oregon's vital necessary energy resources. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my testimony.

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