

Submitter: Ann Turner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2410

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Subject: Oppose HB 2410

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

My name is Ann Turner. I live in Portland, Oregon and am a retired physician. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and Co-President of the Board. Oregon PSR works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival.

I urge you to oppose HB 2410. This bill would bring an unknown number of experimental and dangerous Modular Nuclear Reactors to Umatilla County. As a physician, I worked at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, caring primarily for low income and minority patients, those most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change. To me nuclear energy is an issue of environmental justice.

Umatilla County is a county that already has many health disparities. The residents of Umatilla County should not have yet another health risk, the risk of radiation exposure. The long-term health and safety impacts of radiation include cancer, birth defects, thyroid disease and death. Accidents or leaks from nuclear plants contaminate the soil and water with radioactive waste that remains hazardous for thousands and thousands of years.

Another environmental injustice is cost. While the cost of installing solar and wind has dropped dramatically, the cost of building a nuclear power plant has not dropped. Although one can make the argument that the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow 24/7, there are technologies, like batteries, that can overcome that barrier and be less expensive and safer.

The cost of building a nuclear power plant will be passed on to ratepayers who are already reeling from increasing utility bills. In my practice, many patients came to me to request that I sign a form to prevent their power from being turned off because it would put their health in jeopardy. We have already seen rates rise significantly in Georgia when their new nuclear power plant came on line. Last year in Oregon, there were more customers disconnected from their utilities than ever before because of their inability to pay their bills, as a result of substantial rate increases.

We have already seen the devastation caused by nuclear accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima, the targeting of Ukraine's nuclear power plant by Russia, and the costs and risks in the Pacific Northwest at Hanford. It is unconscionable to build new nuclear power plants anywhere especially in communities that already experience significant health disparities.

Oregonians were right in passing the 1980 Ballot Measure preventing the building of new nuclear power plants in Oregon.

I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2410.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Ann Turner