

Chris Vessely  
Oregon State University  
Mechanical Engineering

Remote Testimony Before the House Climate Energy and Environment Committee  
House Bill 2410  
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**Chair Lively, Vice chair Gamba and Vice chair Levy and Members of the House Climate, Energy and Environment Committee.**

For the record, my name is Chris Vessely, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2410. I grew up in Lake Oswego, Oregon, and am currently a junior at Oregon State University, studying mechanical engineering.

As a student and future engineer, I strongly support HB 2410, which carves out a narrow exemption from Oregon's nuclear energy restrictions to allow a small modular reactor (SMR) demonstration project in Umatilla County. Here's why I believe this legislation is vital for Oregon's future.

**1. Investment into Higher Education:**

Oregon State University is a nationally recognized leader in engineering and nuclear research. Allowing an SMR demonstration project in Umatilla County would provide hands-on research opportunities, attract federal and private funding, and strengthen partnerships with industry leaders. Such an investment would not only enhance OSU's reputation but also create a pipeline of highly skilled graduates prepared to lead Oregon's transition to clean, advanced energy. Oregon has the opportunity to become a hub for SMR development, drawing in talent, research dollars, and economic growth, while ensuring our state remains at the forefront of clean energy technology.

**2. Securing Clean, Dependable Energy for a Tech Driven Future:**

Oregon aims to expand its technology sector, but this growth demands a stable, robust supply of electricity. Industries need consistent power to thrive, and without local, carbon-free energy options, we may find ourselves relying on expensive and uncertain out-of-state imports. Supporting HB 2410 ensures Oregon can meet its ambitions with a reliable, homegrown energy solution that aligns with our climate commitments.

**3. Keeping Oregon's Talent at Home**

Through education and research, Oregon has nurtured a wealth of talent in SMR technology, particularly at Oregon State University. However, without local opportunities to apply this expertise, we risk losing our skilled professionals to other regions or countries already embracing advanced nuclear projects. By approving this exemption, we can retain our innovators and capitalize on the state's investment in its people.

I urge the committee to consider this exemption as a step toward a cleaner, stronger, and more energy-independent Oregon and vote in support of HB 2410. Thank you for your time and consideration.