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Written Testimony Before the House Climate Energy and Environment Committee
House Bill 2410
2/27/2024

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 Matthew Cox, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2410. I grew up in Redmond Oregon and am currently a First year student at Oregon State University, studying Nuclear Engineering. I am also involved in the American Nuclear Society as well as the Institute of Nuclear Material Management.

I am here today as a student and future nuclear engineer to encourage support for HB 2410 that provides a narrow exemption from Oregon's restrictions on nuclear energy, specifically, to allow for a small modular reactor (SMR) demonstration project to be sited in Umatilla County. I believe this legislation is critical for Oregon's future for the following reasons:

1. Investment into Higher Education

Oregon State University is a recognized leader in Nuclear Sciences, with faculty and students contributing to the advancement of small modular reactor technology. Supporting HB 2410 would provide internships, research and funding for not only students at Oregon State University but any student in the field of nuclear science. Support for HB 2410 will bring more jobs to this state and would create a pipeline of highly skilled graduates who can lead Oregon in starting the transition to more efficient, clean energy.

2. Carbon Free Energy For Oregon and Technological Advancements

Supporting HB 2410 presents a significant opportunity for Oregon to advance its clean energy initiatives while fostering economic and technological growth. By enabling research and development of Small Modular Reactors, Oregon can reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and enhance energy resilience. This legislation aligns with the state's commitment to environmental stewardship by promoting a reliable, low-carbon energy source. Additionally, HB 2410 has the potential to attract investment, create high-skilled jobs, and position Oregon as a leader in nuclear science and innovation.

3. Pathway for Modernizing Oregon's Energy Policy

Requiring state agencies to review and update nuclear siting laws promotes a regulatory environment that is both transparent and responsive to community concerns. This forward-looking measure positions Oregon to better navigate the evolving energy landscape while maintaining robust safety and environmental standards. The bill upholds the principle of local control by making its implementation contingent on the approval of Umatilla County voters. This democratic process empowers the community to have a direct voice in the future of energy development in their region.

I urge the committee to support HB 2410 as a step toward a cleaner, more resilient, and energy-independent Oregon by embracing advanced nuclear technology, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and fostering economic and technological growth in the state. Thank you for your time and consideration.