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Written Testimony Before the House Climate Energy and Environment Committee

House Bill 2410

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 Evan Carrel, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2410. I grew up in Molalla, Oregon and am currently a 2nd year undergraduate student at Oregon State University (OSU), studying Nuclear Engineering. I am involved in the OSU American Nuclear Society Student Chapter, and the OSU Institute of Nuclear Materials Management Student Chapter – as a club member for both.

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 science, technology, engineering and mathematics, with faculty and students contributing to advancements in nuclear science research and technology such as small modular reactors. Supporting HB 2410 would provide hands-on learning opportunities, attract research funding, and strengthen collaboration with industry leaders. This investment would create a pipeline of highly skilled graduates who can lead Oregon’s transition to a cleaner energy base.

2. Push Towards Centralized Storage & Reprocessing

One of the major arguments against the use of nuclear power is with how the United States deals with spent nuclear fuel. Currently, the United States does not have a location for centralized spent fuel storage – meaning that spent fuel must be stored on the site of a nuclear plant. Having a nuclear energy plant in Oregon again would support the push for a centralized spent fuel storage solution, as Oregon would be yet another source of spent fuel. If enough demand was seen for nuclear energy, it would be possible for the United States to set up a spent fuel reprocessing to utilize the nuclear waste generated in these reactors. France is a prime example of this being successful.

3. Transition to Cleaner Energy

Nuclear energy remains one of the cleanest sources of energy compared to traditional fossil fuel-based energy sources. It still produces a by-product like fossil fuels, but it is much easier to deal with as there are no harmful particulates being released into the air as it runs. Having Oregon’s energy network be supported by the baseload energy that nuclear energy can provide in place of fossil fuels, would allow Oregon to build up more of its renewable energy network to aid in alleviating the climate crisis. There will always be a need for some type of consistent energy source until renewables based on cyclical events can fill that role with sufficient battery technology. Supporting HB 2410 would only support the development and research of nuclear energy technology, and it would give Oregon the opportunity to become a leader in nuclear energy and renewable energy sources.

I urge the committee to support HB 2410 as a step toward ensuring public health, the option for cheaper and consistent energy long term, energy independence for Oregon, and continued research in alternative energy sources. Thank you for your time and consideration.