



CLEAN WATER. HEALTHY RIVERS.

February 27, 2025

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment

Re: Oppose HB 2410

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Gamba and Levy and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Kelly Campbell and I am the Policy Director for Columbia Riverkeeper. Columbia Riverkeeper is a 25 year old organization with a mission to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River from the headwaters to the ocean and all life connected to it. We represent more than 25,000 members and supporters in Oregon.

Columbia Riverkeeper was founded on concerns around the Hanford nuclear cleanup site on the banks of the Columbia River, the largest nuclear cleanup site in the Western Hemisphere. While some treat Hanford as a sacrifice zone, we view Hanford as a place that matters and advocate for thorough Hanford cleanup. For years we have been looking into the various schemes to build Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMNRs) at Hanford. We believe the focus should be on cleanup, not adding more sources of nuclear waste near the Columbia River, on the Washington side or the Oregon side.

HB 2410 and the other pro-nuclear bills introduced in the Oregon legislature this session allow an opportunity to take a deeper look at the claims of nuclear advocates and see how they measure up to scrutiny.

Since the dawn of nuclear technologies, we have faced the challenge of what to do with nuclear waste. This problem has not been resolved. We still have no permanent federal waste repository, and we are no closer to having one than we were in 1980 when voters passed measure 7 which requires a federal waste repository and another vote of the people of the whole state before any new nuclear power reactors can be sited. Nuclear reactors, including SMNRs, produce radioactive waste that must be isolated from people and the environment, some for hundreds of thousands of years.

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You will hear from nuclear proponents that nuclear waste can be “recycled” or “reprocessed” but this is not true. Reprocessing is costly, polluting, and produces high level waste streams that make interim and long-term storage even more difficult. It also poses a nuclear weapons proliferation risk.

You will hear that small modular nuclear reactors make less waste, but this is also not the case. In fact, a Stanford study found that SMNR waste is 2-30 times the waste of the current reactors. Building new nuclear reactors means saddling generations to come with radioactive waste that we had the short-sightedness to produce.

Because there is no national waste repository, now nuclear advocates point to the so-called “consent based siting” to find communities that will accept “interim” waste to be stored in their communities. Think about this for a minute. What community would actively seek to host nuclear waste? This is a blatant attempt to do what has always been done with hazardous substances: create a sacrifice zone of low income people that will take the waste. We should not be putting any communities in this position.

Nuclear advocates love to talk about it as “clean” energy. But in order to buy into this fantasy, you have to have blinders firmly in place. Let’s pull off the blinders and take a hard look at this supposedly “clean” form of energy. Our journey starts in the uranium mines, almost always on indigenous land, through the dirty milling process, and ends with the nuclear waste for which we have no solution. It may not emit a lot of greenhouse gasses, but it certainly isn’t clean.

Finally, I want to note that HB 2410 is particularly problematic in several ways:

1. It does not include Tribal consent or even Tribal consultation in the bill language.
2. The definition of a statewide moratorium is that it’s statewide. So the logic behind allowing Umatilla County an exemption from state law does not make sense.
3. The idea of an SMNRs for community resilience is not practical. Communities need energy resilience now, not in the hypothetical distant future when SMNRs might be up and running. Luckily, we have the opportunity to support HB 3170 to for more funding for community resilience hubs immediately.

So don't fall for the false solution of nuclear power, a dirty form of energy that creates nuclear waste that will be with us for many generations. We have better options. Please do not advance HB 2410.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Campbell". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline for the "l" in "Campbell".

Kelly Campbell, Policy Director