



To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Re: **Oppose HB 2410**

27 February 2025

Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Levy, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I'm a retired Physician Assistant and serve as Interim Executive Director of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Oregon PSR was founded in 1981 by health professionals concerned about the threat of nuclear war. We've always worked to "Prevent what we cannot cure." In 1985 we shared in the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to our international affiliate, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Our mission has since expanded and includes work on climate change and environmental justice. Through public health education and advocacy, we seek a healthy, just, and peaceful world for present and future generations. We are supported by over 2,400 members.

We strongly support the protections of our 1980 Ballot Measure and urge you to oppose HB 2410, which would bring an unknown number of experimental and dangerous Modular Nuclear Reactors to Umatilla County.

The nuclear fuel cycle brings serious risks to public health and worker health at every stage.

Exposure to the radioactive materials utilized by SMNRs will result in acute, chronic and cumulative health risks for thyroid disease, genetic defects, birth defects, leukemia, other cancers, and death while generating waste that remains hazardous for thousands to millions of years. The risks of catastrophic accidents, like Fukushima and Chernobyl, highlight the potential for irreversible harm to human health and the environment, and are compounded by increasing climate-related disasters.

SMNR sites will become temporary (and likely permanent) nuclear waste repositories, contaminating drinking water sources, indigenous cultural resources, agricultural lands, and harming the health of nearby residents and “downwinders.”

SMNRs will create long-term, extraordinary financial burdens for those tasked with the treatment and disposal of radioactive waste materials. Who will pay for this? Private commercial insurance will not pay. Taxpayers must not end up footing the bill.

As we have seen in the Ukraine, any nuclear facility can become a target for sabotage or terrorism. The potential for theft of nuclear material leading to proliferation of nuclear weapons also increases security risks.

We must not risk the health and safety of Umatilla County residents and all Oregonians for the benefit of Amazon data centers and AI.

You, our elected representatives, must prevent what we cannot cure.

We strongly urge you to oppose HB 2410. Thank you.

Regna Merritt