

Submitter: Linda Marie Richards  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2410

Date: Feb 27, 2025

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Subject: Oppose HB 2410

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Levy, and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment,

My name is Linda Richards and I live in Corvallis, Oregon. As a historian, I study the mistakes and achievements of the nuclear industry and its connection to warfare and human rights infractions. While it is true that nuclear power does not emit CO2 gases during operation, there are massive amounts of energy used to construct and then deconstruct nuclear power plants and their needed materials. There is also the proliferation risk presented by SMNRs and the waste they will also produce.

I am strongly opposed to the megacorporation led initiative that HB 2410 represents and urge you to oppose it. You have the power to protect the health and safety of Umatilla County residents and not put all Oregonians at risk financially and physically for the benefit of Amazon data centers and AI. Please support the protections of the 1980 Ballot Measure. The safety measures we use for nuclear power as it is, are flawed. Nuclear power has a tragic history.

I also have studied the history of radiation regulations and the nuclear industry and its history at the National Archives, CERN, the World Health Organization, and the IAEA and I work with a transnational team of researchers. I have spent most of my life hearing from radiation exposed individuals and communities. In particular, it is clear the Umatilla area has carried much more than their share of poverty along with long lived, perhaps almost eternal, pollution from Hanford and the Umatilla Weapons Depot. They deserve healthy business investment that will benefit their community, not more intergenerational hazards, dangers, and pollutants. The full nuclear fuel cycle brings serious risks to public health and worker health at every stage. The radioactive materials utilized by SMNRs pose acute, chronic and cumulative health risks for thyroid disease, birth defects, cancer 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. Any nuclear facility can become a target for sabotage or terrorism. In this time of critical decision making, nuclear power contaminates people, water and the landscape with extra risks at every step.

I know many may believe nuclear power is the best option for the future, but it does not present an ethical option. One of my greatest concerns is how harmful uranium mining has been to predominantly Indigenous Peoples and minority communities worldwide. Nuclear power should be seen by Oregonians as the transnational human justice concern it is. The lack of attention to studies of the expense of this energy in terms of pollution, contamination and human rights is concerning. A report was issued by the UNIDIR (UN disarmament agency) "Gender and Ionizing Radiation: Towards a New Research Agenda Addressing Disproportionate Harm" 20 November 2024. This is important, because all our measures for radiation safety in terms of the environment flow from the original Atomic Energy Commission health physics studies contained significant errors, including a pivotal misunderstanding of how radiation harms women and girls at much higher rates than males and was not accounted for by the current radiation safety standards. Thank you