

Submitter: Linda Marie Richards  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2038

Date: February 27, 2025

To: House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment

Subject: Oppose 2038

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. This bill has an incomplete approach. I urge you to oppose HB 2038. This bill directs the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) to study the advantages of nuclear power while failing to direct the agency to study the disadvantages of nuclear power. I object to the bias reflected in the bill language and do not want the ODOE to squander precious time and resources to promote or defend nuclear power, when we have substantial evidence of the health and safety risks associated with the nuclear energy industry as well as the outrageous financial burdens it has placed on Oregonians and others.

I support the 1980 Ballot Measure law and reject efforts to undercut the protections it provides to all Oregonians. A study like this one may also be biased, for example because entities like Oregon State University are invested as a patent holder with possible very large financial gains to be made from the promotion of the SMNR technology that may influence the findings.

The full nuclear fuel cycle brings serious risks to public health and worker health at every stage. The radioactive materials utilized by conventional nuclear plants and 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.

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

SMNRs will create long-term financial burdens for those tasked with the treatment

and disposal of radioactive materials. Who will pay for this? Taxpayers should 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 creation and proliferation of nuclear weapons also increases security risks. The extraordinary costs and risks associated with nuclear energy in Oregon, in the Pacific Northwest, at Hanford, at Three-Mile Island, in Chernobyl, in Fukushima, and most recently in the Ukraine have been well documented. If there is extra money available to ODOE for a study, I recommend that it instead be invested in the development of safe renewable infrastructure that can't melt down and won't leave a deadly radioactive mess behind. I strongly urge you to oppose HB 2038.

Thank you.