



**To:** Senate Committee on Energy and Environment  
**From:** Climate Energy Environment Team of COIN  
**Re:** Testimony Opposing SB 635, relating to a study of nuclear energy by OSU  
**Date:** March 2, 2025

***Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment:***

I write today on behalf of the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN) in **opposition to SB 635**. COIN is a coalition of over 50 local Indivisible groups throughout Oregon that cooperate and amplify their joint efforts to advance important state and federal legislation and engage with elected officials to promote progressive causes for the benefit of all Oregonians.

**We strongly oppose SB 635.** Oregonians have made it abundantly clear that we do not want any nuclear power in Oregon unless and until the waste from its generation can be safely disposed of. While new technologies for nuclear power continue to be explored, such as small modular reactors (SMRs), the bottom line is this: There is still no safe repository for nuclear waste.

In fact, small modular reactors, which a number of bills in this current legislative session support, will actually generate more volume and more reactive radioactive waste than conventional nuclear power plants ([Krall, 2022](#)). “Our results show that most small modular reactor designs will actually increase the volume of nuclear waste in need of management and disposal, by factors of 2 to 30 for the reactors in our case study,” said study lead author Lindsay Krall. (Note that NuScale SMRs were included in this study.)

In 1980, Oregonians said no to nuclear energy without a plan for safely disposing of nuclear waste. In 1982, the federal government passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act that was intended to establish a comprehensive program for the safe, permanent disposal of high-level radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Yet, here we are, 45 years later, with “no clear path forward for the siting, licensing, and construction of a geologic repository” for nuclear waste, according to a [2023 report](#) in U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine.

There is no need to waste taxpayer dollars for a study on new nuclear power unless and until there is a safe method of waste disposal for the [80,000 metric tons of nuclear waste already generated](#), much of which is currently sitting in geologically unsafe storage sites. SB 635 is even worse than HB 2038 (which directs ODOE to study the advantages but not the disadvantages of nuclear power). SB 635 directs Oregon State University to conduct a study of nuclear power. Any reasonable person would be right to question OSU’s ability to conduct an impartial study on this topic. As I’m sure you know, OSU has an inherent conflict of interest. It is the original developer and proponent of NuScale’s SMR design and holds an equity share in NuScale. Based on the text of both these bills, one has to wonder if their sponsors are intentionally seeking impartial studies.

Please! Spend our limited public resources on advancing safer, proven, less expensive, and renewable technologies such as solar and wind energy.

Respectfully,

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Citations:

Krall, L., MacFarlane, A., Ewing, R. (2022) Nuclear waste from small modular reactors. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/full/10.1073/pnas.2111833119>

Merits and Viability of Different Nuclear Fuel Cycles and Technology Options and Waste Aspects of Advanced Nuclear Reactors. (2023) National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine Consensus Study Report. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/26500/chapter/2>

Feldman, N. (2018) The Steep Cost of Nuclear Waste in the US. Stanford / Doerr School of Sustainability, Stanford University. <https://sustainability.stanford.edu/news/steep-costs-nuclear-waste-us>