



**To:** Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
**From:** Climate Energy Environment Team of COIN  
**Re:** SB 216  
**Date:** March 3, 2025

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

The Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network (COIN), representing 50 local chapters across the state, is submitting comments opposed to SB 216. While proponents of nuclear power claim a number of advantages, an examination of the actual record shows that these advantages do not pan out in the real world. Advocates have been talking about small modular nuclear (SMR) reactors for many years, and yet not one exists in the United States today. Most estimates I have seen predict another decade, which is what I have read for years.

As with traditional nuclear power, endless cost overruns and construction delays define every type of nuclear power. The recent collapse of the NuScale project in Idaho to build the first SMR in the United States is instructive. After many billions in subsidies from the Federal government, the people received nothing.

Nuclear power is often touted as a clean, carbon-free, source of energy. But while all forms of energy generation require energy for construction, the nuclear fuel cycle is deeply problematic and unique to nuclear energy. No other form of “clean” energy requires a fuel cycle at all, let alone one that requires mining and processing of uranium, both before AND after its use.

Testimony in favor of this bill claims that “nuclear power stations have the smallest land footprint of all energy sources per unit of electricity they produce,” but most of the nuclear energy footprint comes from that mining and processing of uranium, not the power plant itself. And note that without a waste repository, the power plant becomes the permanent repository. Do we want multiple waste repositories in Oregon – on the plant facility land? Nor am I comforted to know that all the nuclear waste would fit on a football field when you learn that a millionth of a gram can be fatal if ingested in certain ways.

45 years on from the adoption of Measure 7 by Oregon voters, there still is no national repository for nuclear waste. There is a reason that almost all new power generation being built in the United States is wind and solar, and this is true no matter the political leaning of the state. Conservative states are in some cases building even more of it. The people of Oregon voted for Measure 7 after the Three Mile Island accident. Chernobyl came soon after that, and much

more recently the Fukushima disaster in a country known for strong planning and management. Serious nuclear accidents are rare but far more severe than any other kind of accident.

The record is clear: nuclear is too expensive, takes too long to build, there is still no safe storage facility for nuclear waste, and continued efforts to build “experimental” or “test” SMRs sounds like a way to extract more subsidies from government. This is one field where Oregon does not need to be a leader.

Respectfully,  
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