To Senate Committee on Energy and the Environment
Opposition to SB 215 and SB 216 and SB 635

March 5, 2025

Chair Solman, Vice-chair Brock Smith, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr. Pat DeLaquil. I usually introduce myself as an energy system modeler and climate policy analyst, but for this bill I want to state that my PhD is in Nuclear Engineering, and that my first job out of grad school was working on nuclear safeguard issues at Sandia National Labs before transferring to their solar energy division.

I will comment briefly that I strongly oppose SB 215 and SB 216 as presumptive and unnecessary.

Also, I am presently opposed to SB 635 in its current form. Although most of my career has focused on renewable energy and energy systems modelling, I have stayed abreast of the nuclear industry – and most recently conducted a technology review and cost analysis for a USAID study in 2022.

My objection to SB 635 is that the scope of the study in neither balanced nor complete. I believe that a review of nuclear power is warranted given the advancements in the technology and the need for new clean energy sources, but no technology should be studies in a vacuum, as this bill currently does.

In particular, the proposed study does not consider risks, such as proliferation potential, safeguards for transport of nuclear materials, or issues of nuclear waste disposal. I also do not believe that OSU, in spite of all their technical expertise, is the correct entity to do this study.

ODOE is already developing a state energy strategy that considers both cost competitiveness and technology development pathway in the context of a rapidly changing energy landscape in the Northwest. Most interestingly, the study examined advanced nuclear and SMR options against other emerging technologies that have the same baseload power characteristics as nuclear. Rather than selecting any of these nuclear options, the model selected Enhanced Geothermal, which has recently experienced dramatic cost reductions leading to several new projects under development in the West. I submit that these modelling results are only indicative and not definitive. However, they demonstrate that there is not a critical need to single-out nuclear for special analysis outside the state's energy strategy process.

Thank you for listening to my recommendations.

Dr. Pat DeLaquil
Gresham, OR

DecisionWare Group
Policy Analysis for
Energy, Economy and Environment