



March 5, 2025

Senator Janeen Sollman, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association Supports an OSU Study of Small Modular Reactors

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Brock Smith, and Members of the Senate Committee Energy & Environment:

Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association (OMEU) is made up of eleven municipally owned and operated electric utilities. Our rates are not-for-profit and set to cover the costs of service, not to earn a rate of return for investors.

OMEU supports the study of small modular reactor (SMR) technology. If Oregon is serious about meeting our carbon-free energy goals, all non-carbon resources should be on the table. When the State initially adopted the Renewable Portfolio Standard and clean energy targets, we were in an era of very little load growth. Now, with electrification and datacenters, we are seeing exponential growth and need every electron we can get. This means protecting existing carbon-free hydro resources, as well as revisiting the question of nuclear in Oregon.

We will need a suite of solutions to address climate impacts. Achieving our state's 100% clean energy goal is a tremendous challenge that will require tools like small modular reactors (SMRs). Unlike intermittent solar and wind, nuclear power provides baseload power; this is extremely important for reliability as coal and natural gas plants come off-line. Additionally, SMRs can be sited close to load centers, lessening the need for expensive transmission builds.

As noted in the 2024 Western Assessment of Resource Adequacy issued by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council:

The pace of change is increasing the risks to reliability across North America. The supply of electricity is not growing fast enough to keep up with demand growth. What was once a simple problem of supply and demand has become complicated by rapid change and increasing variability. Unless we prioritize reliability as the resource mix evolves and becomes more variable, we are at risk for serious and more frequent disruptions. The West must move quickly and more decisively to ensure resource adequacy over the next decade.

OMEU thinks part of the decisive action needed for reliability means revisiting nuclear power. The Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) is not addressing SMRs in their State Energy Strategy because nuclear power is effectively prohibited in current state statute. Given this gap, we appreciate the

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Committee's interest in SMRs and think an OSU study on the topic, as recommended in SB 635, makes good sense.

Sincerely,

/s/ Jennifer Joly

Jennifer Joly, Director

Oregon Municipal Electric Utilities Association