

Submitter: Ally Harris  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB215  
Members of the Committee:

I live in Southeast Portland, an area already struggling with environmental pollution. Thanks to emissions from a nearby glass factory and my proximity to a train yard, I know what it's like to be afraid that my air and soil are contaminated, and to feel powerless to do anything about it. My issues pale in comparison to what nuclear power can do, which is why I'm writing to share my concerns about Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMNRs) and the risks they pose to our health, safety, and environment.

SMNRs use nuclear fission, which creates radioactive materials like uranium, plutonium, and thorium. These substances are dangerous because of their radiation, toxicity, and the long-lasting waste they produce. Accidents or misuse could harm workers and the public at every stage of the process.

Radiation exposure, whether sudden, ongoing, or built up over time, can cause serious health problems. These include cancer, birth defects, organ damage, and even death. While SMNRs aren't yet used in the U.S., experts warn they may be just as risky as traditional reactors. Disasters like Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Fukushima show how dangerous nuclear energy can be.

The radioactive waste from SMNRs stays hazardous for thousands or even millions of years. These sites could become permanent nuclear waste dumps, contaminating water, farmland, and the air we breathe. Communities near these sites, and even those downwind, would face serious health risks.

Nuclear energy is also vulnerable to accidents caused by human error, equipment failures, or natural disasters like earthquakes, wildfires, and extreme weather. Climate change makes these risks even worse.

Why would we make it easier to use nuclear power when we've seen the devastation it has caused in the past? From Chernobyl to Fukushima, the consequences of nuclear accidents are catastrophic and long-lasting. We cannot afford to repeat these mistakes.

I urge you to prioritize safer, renewable energy options and oppose SMNRs. We need solutions that protect our health and environment, not put them at greater risk.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Ally Harris