March 3, 2025

Thank you to the chair, vice chair and members of the committee for reading this testimony,

My name is Alison Cole and these comments are in response to testimony given during today's hearing at 3pm.

My expertise is in prospecting artisanal rock and minerals materials and I have authored two books on the subject. I hold 60 acres of federal mining claims atop the Pacific Northwest's richest known deposit of uranium. I have an intimate, on-the-ground knowledge of the mining industry in Oregon and the West at large. I sit on the Resource Advisory Council to the Bureau of Land Management for Southeastern Oregon, where the state's most valuable critical mineral deposits reside. My comments are my own.

Some assertions were made today that deserve a critical lens:

- *A legislator asserted that no one has died in a nuclear reactor accident in the USA:* This is not true. In fact the first small scale nuclear reactor put online in the US killed its entire operating crew.[1]
- *The same legislator mentioned visiting the Nevada National Security Site and asserted that atomic bomb craters would be a great place to bury waste*: The Nevada National Security Site actually accepts high-level waste for temporary holding, most of it with military origins. This waste sits above ground under a circus tent awaiting a permanent repository. These materials were bound for Yucca Mountain, which was ultimately cancelled because the site is an active faulting zone.[2] The bomb craters left behind by atomic detonations (of which there were almost 1000 such weapons detonated) are direct sources of ionizing radiation and radioactive tritium. In particular, tritium from atomic testing has contaminated the groundwater resources below them.[3] I, too, have been to the Nevada National Security Site but I think I may have paid more attention.
- *Several testifiers asserted that nuclear reactors are safe, particularly small modular reactors:* Safety at the reactor stage in a radioactive fuel's working lifespan is likely the stage in which the least people are harmed. However, safety at the reactor stage is never guaranteed and the US has experienced several dangerous reactor scenarios.[4]

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SL-1
[2] https://www.energy.gov/yucca-mountain-archival-documents
[3] https://www.osti.gov/servlets/purl/788792
[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_reactor_accidents_in_the_United_States

Importantly, all other stages of a radioactive fuel's lifespan pose well-documented harm. Both mining, processing, and the storage of its waste products are directly tied to cancer clusters, birth defects, and premature death.[5] Importantly, the Oregon town of Lakeview is a textbook example of unusually high cancer rates occurring when uranium mining and processing commenced there in the late 1950's.[6] The DOE created a legacy storage site in the town which must be monitored for the waste's lifespan of harm.[7] [8] The DOE uses the term "legacy" for its waste sites because they must be monitored and maintained (and paid for) for thousands of years to come.[9]

I stand in opposition to all three bills. Thank you for taking my rebuttals into consideration.

With sincerity,
Alison Cole

[5] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK230656/
[6] https://americanarchive.org/catalog/cpb-aacip-153-13905s2g
[7] https://www.energy.gov/lm/articles/lakeview-oregon-disposalprocessing-sites-fact-sheet
[8] https://www.oregon.gov/energy/safety-resiliency/Pages/Uranium.aspx
[9] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ism1Dfx8kUU