

Submitter: Bonnie New

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB635

I am writing in strong opposition to Senate Bill 635.

Although we have ever-increasing need for more energy, particularly for such installations as data centers, and although nuclear energy is touted by some as clean energy, SB 635's mission to advance nuclear energy use in Oregon is thoroughly misguided.

Nuclear energy does not produce particulate air emissions like fossil fuels, but is in no way clean energy. Regardless of advances in reactor technology, nuclear energy is inherently dirty on both the front end (mining) and the back end (radioactive waste, for which we have no suitable management plan or facilities). Both the mining and the process waste have unacceptable environmental and human health effects which have been extensively studied and documented over the last 70+ years. The taxpayer-funded study proposed in SB 635 is a waste of both time and money, and is a transparent lead-in to promote nuclear power use in Oregon.

Even if a study was needed, specifying an entity to do the study is cause for serious scrutiny, and especially if the entity is known to have a significant conflict of interest in the subject matter and/or financial relationship. The sponsor of SB 635, Senator Daniel Bonham, should be ashamed to specify that OSU lead his proposed "study" because of OSU's obvious conflict of interest. OSU is the developer and proponent of the Nu-Scale small nuclear reactor and even owns a financial interest in Nu-Scale.

In addition, using taxpayer money to fund a study related to use of nuclear energy in Oregon, even if such a study was needed, is inappropriate at this time. Oregonians voted in 1980 to ban nuclear power in Oregon unless (1) a safe and permanent federal repository for waste was built, AND (2) unless Oregon voters voted to allow nuclear power. Neither of those has happened, let alone both, so the idea of using taxpayer money to pave a path to nuclear energy use in Oregon is inappropriate/disingenuous at this time.

I urge you in the strongest possible way to reject this bill.

Thank you,
Bonnie New, MD MPH