

Submitter: Ann Turner

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB635

To the Senate Committee on Energy & Environment

Chair Sollman, Vice Chair Brock Smith, Committee Members Golden, Pham and Robinson,

My name is Ann Turner. I live in Portland, Oregon and am a retired physician. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and Co-President of the Board. Oregon PSR works to protect human life from the gravest threats to health and survival.

As a physician, I worked at Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center, caring primarily for low income and minority patients, those most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change. Nuclear energy is a false solution.

I strongly urge you to oppose SB 635. This Act tells OSU to study and make a report on nuclear energy. It directs Oregon State University to conduct a feasibility study on nuclear energy generation in this state.

Asking OSU to study nuclear energy is like asking Chevron to study the advantages of gasoline-powered cars. OSU, with massive amounts of federal funding, developed NuScale Power that makes small modular nuclear reactors (SMNR's). Nuclear power, including SMNRs, produces high levels of radioactive waste without a safe storage facility. Uranium is mined on indigenous lands, exposing tribal communities to the long-term health and safety impacts of radiation. These include cancer, birth defects, thyroid disease and death. Accidents or leaks from nuclear plants pose these same risks to the surrounding communities, contaminating soil and water, with radioactive waste that remains hazardous for thousands and thousands of years.

Nuclear power is extremely costly, with construction delays, and is consistently over budget. The cost of building a nuclear power plant will be passed on to ratepayers who are already reeling from increasing utility bills. In my practice, many patients came to me to request that I sign a form to prevent their power from being turned off because it would put their health in jeopardy. We have already seen rates rise significantly in Georgia when their new nuclear power plant came on line. Last year in Oregon, there were more customers disconnected from their utilities than ever before because of their inability to pay their bills, as a result of substantial rate increases.

Currently, there are no SMNR's in operation in the U.S. Why would Oregon choose to be a test site for this unproven and dangerous technology? We have already seen the devastation caused by nuclear accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima, the targeting of Ukraine's nuclear power plant by Russia and the costs and risks in the Pacific Northwest at Hanford. Let's study investing in safe infrastructure for truly renewable sources of energy.

As legislators, I ask that you oppose SB 635 that would study bringing nuclear power to Oregon. We must prevent what we cannot cure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Ann Turner, MD
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