
From: Peter Bergel <pbergel@igc.org>
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2017 1:51 PM
To: rep.kenhelm@state.or.us; Rep.MarkJohnson@state.or.us; Rep Power; Rep.PhilBarnhart@state.or.us;
Rep.PhilBarnhart@state.or.us; Rep Holvey; Rep Marsh; Rep Reschke; Rep Smith D; Reiley Beth;
Hernandez Maria
Subject: Testimony of Peter Bergel on SB 990

Testimony of Peter Bergel on SB 990

May 24, 2017

Dear Chairman Helm and Members of the E & E Committee:

I will be out of the state on May 24 and therefore unable to attend the hearing on SB 990 so thank you for the opportunity to address you in this manner.

I am unalterably opposed to this measure and ask you to vote against taking any positive action on it in this – or any future - legislative session.

I was a co-drafter of 1980's voter-approved Ballot Measure 7. This measure required there to be in existence an operating federal nuclear waste repository before future nuclear plants could be sited in Oregon. It also required that a statewide vote of Oregon's citizens approve such siting. I was also the director of the volunteer effort that qualified the measure for Oregon's ballot and of the election campaign which followed and led to its passage by Oregon's voters.

This task was one of the most difficult I have ever attempted, but I stuck with it because I believed – and still do – that nuclear power is a particularly disastrous Faustian bargain.

- It is prohibitively expensive, as the Northwest's experience with the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) showed shortly after our ballot measure saved Oregon ratepayers from being saddled with the costs of the Pebble Springs plant in Arlington.
- It is unforgivably hazardous, as experience with the Chernobyl and Fukushima meltdowns has demonstrated.
- It creates a witch's brew of waste products which the nuclear industry has consistently - for the past 70 years - claimed it was just about to be able to manage safely. They lied when they first made that claim and they are still lying about it. Some of these waste products remain deadly for a quarter of a million years – far longer than any human institution can possibly ensure security. All of recorded human history is far shorter than that.
- The U.S. nuclear industry has always depended upon the liability limitation provisions of 1957's Price-Anderson Act. Without that gigantic federal subsidy there would never have been a nuclear industry. Private insurance companies understand the magnitude of the financial risk inherent in nuclear power and have always shied away from taking it on. I hope that you, the representatives of Oregon's citizens, demonstrate the same cautious skepticism that insurance companies do.

In 1979-80 it was not legal to utilize paid signature collectors to qualify initiative petitions for the ballot, so this measure was the result of an enormous statewide volunteer effort. For it then to pass, despite a 20-1 spending disadvantage – and the opposition of Oregon's most powerful corporation, speaks of widespread voter commitment to the concept.

Legislators should be very reticent to blunt the purpose of a voter-initiated and –passed ballot measure, especially one which overcame such an uphill struggle to win passage.

Thank you for your attention.

Peter Bergel
1850 Saginaw St. S.
Salem, OR 97302
503-428-4280