

WRITTEN COMMENTS TO OPPOSE HB2215 REGARDING SMALL MODULAR NUCLEAR REACTORS IN OR.

I am Dr. Joyce Follingstad, psychologist, nurse and cancer survivor. I am writing in opposition to HB 2215 that promote moving forward with Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMNR). I joined the people of Oregon in 1980 who spoke out with their vote against any future nuclear power plants in Oregon, unless the people of Oregon vote for a nuclear power plant and unless a high level nuclear waste repository has been built and is federally licensed and operating, which, to date, has not occurred and has little likelihood to be so licensed in the future.

It is destructive in many ways, to continue producing electricity from nuclear power plants of any size including the production of the outrageously toxic radioactive wastes. It is destructive of our environment and of our indigenous communities with over 15,000 uranium mines, mostly on native lands. Nuclear power uses much needed water and returns it at high temperatures to our rivers, killing fish and other creatures. Any land that is used for the storage of wastes will be highly toxic to people and animals for hundreds of thousands of years.

Nuclear power is destructive to the health of our people causing numerous cancers and early deaths. Our country bears a heavy health burden, as one in every two men in our country will now get cancer in his lifetime and one in every three women will get cancer as well. The radiation that we now have in our everyday lives exceeded the recommended amount considered safe for the average male, so the amount was simply raised, putting us all at greater risk for cancers!

Nuclear power is also destructive because the nuclear waste will burden our children with materials that are dangerous and life-threatening beyond their lifetimes for a quarter of a million years, endangering them with more nuclear materials that can be sabotaged by terrorists and potentially be used in the production of nuclear arms. In addition, scattered SMNRs will be hard to keep secure in this time in our country of increasing attacks on our power grids.

Even a small meltdown would be catastrophic. We citizens cannot insure our bodies or property against nuclear accidents. Living in a state that is overdue for a level 9 earthquake sets us up for a meltdown. An SMNR may only need a 20 acre footprint, but do you want it built next to you or your family? And how many square miles are needed for the evacuation zone? Inevitably, nuclear materials will endanger citizens by truck accidents, train derailments, forest fires or other natural disasters.

Nuclear power is also economically destructive. NuScale is already 50% more costly than originally imagined. Nuclear plants routinely cost much more than projected. One plant in Japan cost 9 billion, ran for one day and was permanently shut down. Some plants in the US are being closed permanently because the electricity produced is more expensive than the alternatives that are now available. The only functioning nuclear power plant in Washington State is running at a financial deficit. In addition, since no one wants to insure nuclear power plants, the government subsidized them by insuring them with taxpayer money! So, we get doubly harmed!

In addition to all the ways that nuclear power is destructive, it is NOT an answer to the climate crisis. Any nuclear plants started now would take up to a decade to be built and operational. The mining operations and transportation of nuclear fuels uses huge amounts of fossil fuels, which would offset any claims that this is a green power source. Wind and solar renewable power are cheaper, well-developed and, along with storage, can be implemented quickly.

It is so very reckless to put aside the will of the people for an idea for which there is not even a working model! And these SMNRs will be producing more nuclear waste per megawatt than the old style reactors. It is my understanding that the type of fuel needed for SMNRs is only available at present from Russia. Given our present promotion of the Ukrainians in their war with Russia, reliance on a fuel source from Russia seems fraught with many problems. We learned from our experience with Trojan to not depend on nuclear for our electricity, as it was down for repairs more than it was up and producing electricity. Indeed, there were no blackouts when it was off line or when it was decommissioned, so we learned that we could do best without it, and we still can!

In closing, we remember that even the Father of the Nuclear Navy, General Rickover, opposed the continued use of nuclear power IN ANY FORM, due to the costs, danger and abundant problems with nuclear power.

I ask you to please oppose HB2215!

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