



CLEAN WATER. HEALTHY RIVERS.

Thursday, February 15, 2024

To: House Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Kelly Campbell, Policy Director

Re: OPPOSE HB 4090

Columbia Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization with a mission to restore and protect the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Columbia Riverkeeper has over 16,000 members and supporters who live, work, and recreate throughout the Columbia River Basin, including more than 7,000 members and supporters in Oregon.

Columbia Riverkeeper appreciates the urgency of the climate crisis and the need for a rapid and just transition to a clean energy future. However, we have concerns that the approach this bill takes may have unintended consequences.

If this bill moves forward in any form, we strongly support the section in the -3, -4, and -6 amendments that clarifies that this bill would not allow nuclear power plants to be sited in Oregon. Current Oregon law does not allow the siting of nuclear power plants in Oregon without a vote of the people to overturn the moratorium on nuclear siting in Oregon and we do not believe it would be appropriate to create such a drastic change to current law in this bill.

We are concerned that this bill would allow projects on federal lands within Oregon to bypass the Energy Facilities Siting Council (EFSC) and only be subjected to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. We note that NEPA is subject to the whims of the Presidential administration, and that a future administration might gut or change NEPA, which would leave Oregon with no power to impact siting of these projects on federal lands within our state. In such a scenario, environmental justice concerns, impacts on local communities, and input from Tribes could be severely compromised.

We also note that EFSC is in the midst of a significant rulemaking process intended to clarify and modernize the siting application process. Passing this bill would undermine the process already underway. Rather than push through such a potentially impactful bill in this short session, we suggest taking the time for full vetting of this proposal, ensuring that legislation to streamline the process of renewable energy projects does not have unintended negative consequences on the people of Oregon, our climate, or the environment, and takes into account principles of a just transition to a clean energy future. For these reasons, we urge you to vote no on HB 4090. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

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