

To: The Honorable Members of the Oregon House Committee on Climate, Energy and Environment, and the Joint Ways and Means Committee

Date: Feb. 26, 2025

RE: HB 2038

As an Oregon citizen, I'd like to register my opposition to HB 2038, which tasks the Oregon Department of Energy with "studying" how to add nuclear energy to Oregon's energy portfolio.

- Oregon citizens were right to enact moratorium in 1980 on the construction of nuclear power plants in the state. Without a statewide vote ending that moratorium, there is no reason for the Oregon DOE to study nuclear power – nor should it.
- Nuclear power is not a solution to climate change – it is not clean, carbon-free, or sustainable. Nor is it safe: the health of communities near reactors, as well as those downwind and downstream are placed at risk.
- The bill as written seems clearly slanted as "pro-nuke" – I would not be surprised if it was written by nuclear lobbyists -- after all, the first item the DOE is to study the "advantages" of nuclear energy.
- Several of the items the OR DOE is required to study are already included in the first budget, as they constitute potential "advantages" of nuclear energy, and should be removed from the bill. Specifically 1c, 1 d, and 1g:
 - (c) How the use of nuclear energy may support current energy systems;
 - (d) Economic growth and workforce development potential for Oregon communities;
 - (g) How the use of locally produced nuclear energy can eliminate dependence on foreign-sourced energy;
- Item 1h, "Use of thorium as an option for producing nuclear energy" is nonsensical without context – it sounds like it's on the nuclear lobby's wish list. If this remains on the bill, the OR DOE should be directed to study its shortcomings, including startup costs and amount of fissile material produced.
- While the bill asks the DOE to study the safety of nuclear energy and waste disposal, and nuclear energy's "reliability" – the entire context of the bill assumes that these issues will be studied with an eye to mitigating them, rather than recognizing that these issues can and should be significant, inarguable reasons not to move toward construction of any nuclear power plants anywhere, much less in Oregon.
- If this bill moves forward – I hope it does not -- it should be amended to ask the OR DOE to study:

- (a) Safety and reliability of nuclear energy;
 - i. This should include a study of the entire lifespan of nuclear power plants.
- (b) Methods of managing and disposing of nuclear waste safely;
- (c) Economic growth and workforce development potential for Oregon communities;
- (d) Monetary and practical provisions for the state of Oregon to address health concerns and lawsuits related to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of nuclear power plants.
 - i. This should include exploring how any such plants would be safely decommissioned; and
 - ii. how ratepayers would be compensated if the plant is shut down before its projected lifespan is complete (as Trojan was, for safety concerns).
- (d) Funding models for building nuclear power plants that do not require public subsidies;
- (e) Examine the advantages of requiring that any future nuclear power plants constructed in Oregon be run by a publicly-owned utility;
- (f) Draft regulations so that, In the event a privately-owned utility or company is allowed to build and operate a nuclear power plant, any profits above 5% be given to the citizens of Oregon, with company financials subject to annual independent audits performed by the state of Oregon or its authorized agent.

I respectfully ask that you do not approve this bill going forward; and that if you do, you consider incorporating some of my suggestions to make this bill more comprehensive and less slanted toward assuming that nuclear power in Oregon is a good idea for its citizens.

Benjamin Chambers