

Good morning Representative Lively and members of the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment. My name is Max Menchaca, and I live in Portland. I strongly urge this committee to please **OPPOSE** and **REJECT HB 2410**, as this attempt to circumvent our state's moratorium against nuclear power makes absolutely no sense for the citizens of Oregon, nor does it help this bill's supporters – and that's even before considering a position on nuclear power in the first place!

I moved to the Pacific Northwest to obtain my graduate degree, and after finishing I now work in the tech industry. As a result, I know that the data centers built by some of our biggest tech companies play an important role in our country's infrastructure. I know these companies – including Amazon and Microsoft, who have data centers in The Dalles – are some of the biggest supporters of repealing this moratorium against nuclear energy. Yet, much like the boondoggle of money that is sent to the Bechtel black hole every year at Hanford, exempting Umatilla County from this moratorium in attempts to build a nuclear reactor would be an incredibly bad black hole of taxpayer money.

The proposed demonstration site, a “small modular reactor” (SMRs) has no precedent in the United States. NuScale and X-Energy, two of the companies cited as most likely to build these reactors in Umatilla County, are already plagued with cost overruns. They over-promise and under-deliver – and that's without ANY demonstrated ability to build a reactor in the first place! This hardly sounds like a winning proposition for the taxpayers' money.

The data centers in The Dalles cite “trade secrets” about their water usage, something The Oregonian has already exposed as being much larger than Google or the city dares to admit. The citizens of The Dalles have had to fight hard to get records of THEIR city's records of water use PUBLIC! And these are the same companies that are promoting nuclear energy to power these data centers, which are much less “job-creating” and “tax-generating” than they are “secretive”. In what universe should Umatilla County or this legislature trust these companies and their cronies with nuclear power?

And yes, let's consider the nuclear aspect of the bill. None of the concerns raised in the 1980 proposition leading to the moratorium have been addressed – there is still, 45 years later, no nuclear waste repository in the US. Empirically, every study done on the full lifecycle of nuclear power (including the sourcing of the uranium needed) has shown it to be much more expensive than existing energy sources (renewable or otherwise). Furthermore, nuclear energy produces significant carbon emissions, not to mention acute pollution issues at the mine sites themselves. Nuclear power remains just as much a dead-end in terms of power infrastructure that it did in 1980. And then there's all the ill effects of radioactive waste generated by nuclear plants. SMRs don't create waste any cleaner than existing large plants. The question still remains: where will this waste go?

More data centers are planned in Oregon. Given even the most optimistic timeline of SMR construction, the energy demand of existing and planned data centers are going to strain our state's grid long before SMRs are even online, let alone able to help power any of these centers. If these reactors aren't even going to be providing any use in the mid-term, are they worth building considering all the financial and scientific risks?

It's the same old story again: big companies move to a community citing advantages that are never quite as large as promised, hide the true costs of what they do, and then grab what they can while the taxpayers are left footing the bill. This bill's attempts to circumvent our state's nuclear moratorium would be a disaster.

I strongly urge the committee to **OPPOSE HB2410**. Thank you for your attention.