



Re: HB 4046 – Letter of Support

Date: February 9, 2026

Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of UA Local 290, the Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers (OSAEW), the Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association (PMCA), and the Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA), we respectfully urge your support for HB 4046.

HB 4046 is about gathering facts, not fast-tracking nuclear development. This measure does not approve, site, or construct a nuclear facility. Instead, it directs the Oregon Department of Energy, in partnership with Oregon State University, to conduct a transparent, independent study of advanced nuclear technologies, including small modular and microreactors, so policymakers, trades workers, and communities have reliable, objective information to guide future decisions. For infrastructure with long timelines and high stakes, a data-driven approach is essential.

The study outlined in HB 4046 examines critical issues, including reactor design and safety, human health and environmental impacts, feasibility in Oregon, grid reliability, industrial decarbonization, workforce and economic impacts, waste management options, financing and ownership models, and regulatory and land-use considerations. Importantly, the study is funded through federal or private sources and does not draw from Oregon's General Fund.

For Oregon's building trades, advanced nuclear represents high-skill, high-wage union work. These facilities rely heavily on pipefitting, sheet metal, steam systems, mechanical construction, and long-term maintenance – core crafts represented by our organizations. These are family-wage careers supported by registered apprenticeships, not short-term or gig-style jobs. Studying nuclear energy now allows Oregon to plan for workforce needs proactively, rather than importing labor later.

Reliable baseload energy is also critical to protecting industrial jobs across the state. Many manufacturing, fabrication, and energy-intensive facilities cannot operate on intermittent power alone. Advanced nuclear can serve as a carbon-free complement to renewables, supporting grid reliability while keeping industrial employers and union jobs in Oregon. Nuclear energy is also highly efficient, and its reliability has been proven over decades, including long-standing use of small modular reactor technology by the U.S. military, beginning with the first nuclear-powered submarine in 1954.

Other states, including Washington, New York, and Texas, are already studying or deploying advanced nuclear technologies, and the measure appropriately directs Oregon to review those efforts as part of its analysis. With electricity demand projected to nearly double by 2050, and nuclear projects requiring years or decades of planning, HB 4046 ensures Oregon does not fall behind in preparing for future energy and economic needs.

Early planning is also essential to ensuring strong labor standards. Workforce analysis conducted at the front end allows labor and policymakers to advocate for registered apprenticeships, prevailing wage requirements, local hire provisions, and project labor agreements. HB 4046 helps create the foundation for union jobs by design, not as an afterthought.

Finally, safety, health, and environmental considerations are central to this study. Advanced reactor designs, modern safety standards, and improved waste management practices represent significant advancements over technologies and assumptions from the 1980s. Evaluating these technologies using today's standards is both responsible and necessary.

HB 4046 supports an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy that includes renewables, efficiency, and emerging technologies. Relying on a single solution puts workers and communities at risk. This measured approach helps Oregon evaluate every available tool to meet climate goals while protecting good, union jobs.

Thank you for your consideration, and we respectfully urge your support for HB 4046.

Sincerely,

UA Local 290

Oregon State Association of Electrical Workers (OSAEW)

Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association (PMCA)

Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA)