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Submitted Testimony Before the House Climate Energy and Environment Committee  
Support for House Bill 4046  
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**Chair Lively, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Levy, and Members of the House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee.**

For the record, my name is Matthew Cox, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 4046. I grew up in Redmond, Oregon, and am currently in my second year at Oregon State University, majoring in Nuclear Engineering with a Health Physics Focus and Physics minor. I also serve on the Engineering Student Council as the senator for the School of Nuclear Science and Engineering and as an Undergraduate Representative for OSU's American Nuclear Society chapter.

I am here today as a student and future health physicist to encourage support for HB 4046, which directs the State Department of Energy to conduct a comprehensive, transparent study on advanced nuclear energy technologies and their potential role in Oregon's energy future. In addition, it will establish a transparent study process with an emphasis on public reporting, conflict-of-interest disclosures, and legislative oversight.

## **1. Investment in Higher Education**

Oregon State's School of Nuclear Science and Engineering is one of the fastest-growing, largest, and most successful nuclear science programs in the nation. This bill is not only important in ensuring that nuclear talent stays within the state, but protects a path for students here at OSU. Encouraging more research on nuclear energy and reactors could open countless research paths for students in the state. As the senator for my school, my duties include meeting with many students who are involved in research groups, and they all report benefiting immensely from having hands-on experience offered at research labs. These labs would grow if this bill is passed, bringing more potential opportunities to the students at Oregon State University and increasing the chance of those students staying in Oregon with newfound opportunities made possible by HB 4046.

## **2. Industrial Economic Potential**

HB 4046 directs the Department of Energy to evaluate how advanced nuclear reactors could support large energy use and industrial facilities, including a comparison of reliability, transmission constraints, and long-term deployment outlook against other energy sources. Reliable power is a key

factor in attracting major industries, creating more high-skilled jobs, and bolstering economic development in Oregon. By requiring a formal study of these cases and their economic impacts, the bill helps Oregon better understand whether advanced nuclear could strengthen grid reliability while also supporting industrial growth and local job creation.

### **3. Safety, Waste Management, and Transparency**

Commercial nuclear power in the United States operates under some of the most stringent safety and radiation protection regulations of any industry. As a nuclear engineering student focused on health physics, my courses focus on radiation safety, exposure limits, and protective system design. HB 4046 requires a transparent study of safety systems, emergency preparedness, and nuclear waste management pathways before any policy decisions are made. This technical review process supports informed decisions, which is vital in protecting the people who live here. In addition, this bill helps to ensure that any future discussions about nuclear energy in Oregon are grounded in verified safety data and modern regulatory practice.

I urge the committee to support HB 4046 as a step toward a cleaner, more reliable, and evidence-driven energy future for our state. Thank you for your time and consideration, as well as the opportunity to use my voice.