

Comments to House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
Subject: HB 4046
February 9, 2026

Greetings Chair Lively, Vice-Chair Gamba, Vice-Chair Levy, Members of the Committee,

I am Dr. Theodora Tsongas, an environmental health scientist with a career in public health. I am a member of Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility and the American Public Health Association.

I strongly urge you to vote no on HB 4046 with or without the -2 amendment for the reason that much of the data is already there, and -

- a study is not necessary because the Oregon Department of Energy has already completed an evaluation in their Energy Strategy in 2025 and concluded that nuclear power is not cost effective. (There are many examples well as of the cost overruns of recent proposed and completed nuclear power projects, as well as economic analyses demonstrating the increasing costs.)
- the allowance of outside funding could easily influence and bias the outcome and thus make for further delay in addressing the issue of energy production, thus making it non-responsive to urgent climate or energy resource concerns.
- requiring the oversight of Oregon State University would compromise the results because of Oregon State University's known development and promotion of the NuScale modular nuclear reactors.
- another study is not necessary to understand the known and well documented risks to life and health associated with nuclear energy in order to solve a problem that is solvable with less injurious, less expensive, and already available technology.
- it is well documented that exposure to radiation is more harmful to infants, children, and females than to adult males and poses risks to future generations because of effects on the genetic material.
- nuclear power is not carbon free because uranium and other scarce resources must be mined, processed, and transported using fossil fuels. It is deceitful to ignore the reality of production of the fuel.
- the affected communities are left out of the decision making process. This is unjust and exposes them to the uncertainties as well as the short and long term costs without their consent. There are high risks associated with this technology that are known and that have been and will be forced on the affected communities, as well as the whole state. It is not overstating the case to say that a study funded by outside interests would try to minimize these risks.
- The Affiliated Tribes have NOT been consulted and involved in decisions and are opposed to the development of nuclear power and are NOT pro-nuclear. They have experience first hand with the downsides of nuclear energy. To say that they have been consulted implies that they are in agreement and is deceitful.
- Federal nuclear safeguards to health are being dismantled as we speak, and these include safeguards for both nuclear industry workers as well as the public. This means that the public will be allowed to be exposed to radiation at levels that do cause illness and death. So accepting or soliciting Federal funds will also bias the study.
- It is clear that this effort to hide the true costs and risks of nuclear technology is to provide energy to feed the growth of heavy industry and data centers, which carry their own unjustified burdens on affected communities. The myth of jobs is just that: a myth, and would only serve to construct future stranded assets.
- and we haven't even talked about the nuclear waste. It is known that so-called small modular reactors will produce the same amount or more nuclear waste than conventional reactors. And where does it go? More important, where will it be SAFELY stored?

This study is a waste of scarce state resources if it receives outside funding because the study will be biased and the information obtained questionable, even to the extent of eroding confidence in the work of our State agencies.

Please do NOT pass HB4046 out of committee. What's the point of doing another study just because we don't like the conclusions of the ones already done? Not a wise use of scarce resources.

Thank you for your time and attention.