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February 11, 2026

To: House Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee

RE: Oppose HB 4046

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Levy and Gamba,

My name is Xitlali Torres, I am writing on behalf of Verde. Our mission is to build environmental wealth in our communities through outreach, advocacy, and social enterprise. The -2 amendment improves the original bill with balanced language, increased transparency, and a slightly longer timeline. Unfortunately, we remain in opposition to HB 4046 because now is not the time to undermine Oregon's protective laws with a rushed study that leaves out genuine community input.

Environmental Justice demands that communities most impacted by environmental harms and climate impacts are at the forefront of decision-making. Nuclear waste is not a frivolous consequence, it's a real risk to create new sacrifice zones. This makes it especially concerning that HB 4046's inclusion of community voices is so weak.

We asked for a minimum remedy that the study includes an advisory committee of affected communities who could bring their expertise of lived experience to influence the study. The public participation process has shortcomings, and it is not nearly enough to meet the magnitude of this study's possible impacts. The study is lacking in public health voices, clean air and water advocate voices, and most importantly, voices of communities that could be most impacted.

We are concerned that nuclear power, and this study bill, are not compatible with the principles of a just transition off fossil fuels. Energy transition may be inevitable, but justice is not. What we have seen historically, in Oregon, and elsewhere, is that nuclear projects don't always deliver as they promise, and can harm communities for decades¹². Going forward with HB 4046 that lacks genuine community input and direction could risk repeating past harms.

¹ https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/2506_FSW_GoingNuclear.pdf

² <https://www.atomicbamboozle.com/>

It is alarming that we are even considering this while our federal nuclear standards are being attacked, including protections for workers, and requirements to protect groundwater from nuclear waste³⁴⁵.

The suggestion that other states' studies could serve our own is concerning when many of the studies are narrowly focused and one-sided. We'd be better off to wait and see if their projects are actually built up smoothly.

There are so many other energy priorities that we need you to focus on. ODOE's energy strategy did not find nuclear energy to be a solution for Oregon⁶. We urge you to focus time, energy, and money on development of energy sources that are trusted, and continue to work for energy efficiency, transmission, and storage.

HB 4046 is still lacking in genuine community participation, it is still at risk of biased reporting due to the allowance of private funding, and it will not produce a study that the public can be confident in. **In the moment we are facing, we must be hypervigilant to uphold our environmental and human protective standards and focus on trusted and proven energy strategies that align with a just transition for Oregonians.**

I urge you to vote no on HB 4046.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Xitlali Torres
Air Quality and Climate Coordinator
Verde

³ <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/28/nx-s1-5677187/nuclear-safety-rules-rewritten-trump>

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<https://www.npr.org/2025/12/17/nx-s1-5608371/trump-executive-order-new-nuclear-reactors-safety-concerns>

⁵ <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML2530/ML25303A288.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.oregon.gov/energy/Data-and-Reports/Documents/Oregon-Energy-Strategy.pdf>