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STATE SENATOR  
DISTRICT 13



**OREGON STATE SENATE**  
**Testimony in Support of HB 4046**

February 10, 2026

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Gamba, Vice Chair Levy, and Members of the Climate, Energy, and Environment Committee,

Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to HB 4046.

HB 4046 is framed as a neutral study, but I believe it is misleading, unnecessary, and a poor use of limited legislative time and public resources at a moment when we need to move *faster*, not slower, on climate action.

Oregonians have history with nuclear energy and we have already answered this question. In 1980, Ballot Measure 7 made it clear: no new nuclear power plants in this state unless there is a permanent repository for nuclear waste, and only with approval of the voters in a statewide election. We also remember the structural issues and costs of the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant, which closed in 1992. Nuclear is already part of our state's energy history, and we don't need to go down that road again.

We are told this bill is "just a study." But studies suggest uncertainty, or an agenda. An industry funded study, could shape narratives with potentially biased information then used to justify future investments. A white paper summarizing existing research would be sufficient..

Even if Oregon chose to pursue nuclear power today, it would take a decade or more to come online. We cannot wait ten or fifteen years while our climate and energy goals demand immediate emissions reductions. Investing time and money into nuclear delays investment in solutions that are deployable now: solar, wind, grid modernization, energy efficiency, and virtual power plants. These are already built into Oregon's Energy Strategy, which is where we should actually be spending our time and investments.

I am aware that many people mistakenly believe nuclear energy to be clean energy. While it is true that it is greenhouse-gas-free at the point of generation, the *full* lifecycle

includes: uranium mining, milling, enrichment, transport, waste storage, and long-term risk.

The impacts of the toxins and waste fall disproportionately on Tribal and rural communities. The Navajo Nation alone has more than 500 abandoned uranium mines, and experiences lasting health and environmental consequences. Tribal lands from North Dakota to Texas have shouldered the burden of uranium extraction and toxic waste. In Oregon, According to the US Dept of Energy website ([hanford.gov](https://www.hanford.gov)), tribes affected by Hanford operations under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 include:

- the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation,
- the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation,
- the Nez Perce Tribe, and
- The Wanapum People who still live near Hanford at Priest Rapids.

We can find cautionary tales close to home about nuclear, but we also can go international and learn from other countries with far more experience operating nuclear power plants that have already asked and answered the question Oregon is being told it still needs to study.

- Germany, made a deliberate choice through its *Energiewende* to phase out nuclear power entirely, completing the shutdown of all nuclear plants by 2023. Germany's public investment and political focus is on scaling wind, solar, storage, and grid modernization, rather than costly nuclear infrastructure.
- Switzerland, following the Fukushima disaster, decided in 2011 to phase out nuclear energy as well. The Mühleberg nuclear plant closed in 2019. They are focused on renewables and efficiency instead of pursuing new nuclear construction.
- Sweden, a country often cited by nuclear advocates, operates some nuclear reactors, but has decommissioned others. It has rapidly expanded wind and hydro power, showing that even in a country with a long nuclear history, new investment has overwhelmingly going toward renewables.
- Belgium has formal plans to phase out nuclear power while making significant investments in offshore wind.
- Italy stopped nuclear power investments decades ago after a public referendum and now focuses on renewable energy.

Essentially, countries with real-world nuclear experience are not betting their climate futures on new nuclear construction. They are prioritizing technologies that are faster to deploy, lower cost, and scalable within the timelines climate science demands.

A lot of the recent interest in nuclear energy seems to center on Small Modular Reactors, or SMRs. You may have heard them described as safer, cheaper, and more flexible. But, in reality, they are unproven, not deployable at scale, and extraordinarily expensive. They produce significantly more waste per unit of energy, many times more than older reactors. Only one NuScale reactor design has been certified, and it has raised safety concerns. And, upper estimates for SMR costs are \$20,000 per kilowatt, with real-world projects costing billions.

Meanwhile, wind and solar produce *more energy per dollar of investment* than nuclear power. So nuclear is not just an environmental concern, it is an affordability and smart investment issue. Electricity demand is rising, especially from data centers and the tech sector. But nuclear power is an expensive, non-strategic reaction to this growth. We should not divert public dollars away from faster, cheaper, cleaner solutions. We already know enough to say this is not the direction Oregon should pursue. A study is not necessary.

I believe that the greatest threat to our climate and energy future is not nuclear energy, but delay. It is my hope that our legislature does not stall with a study. Allowing a nuclear study to be funded by entities with a direct financial interest, including companies exploring SMR deployment, undermines the credibility of the study.

I urge you to oppose HB 4046 and instead focus on scaling the clean, affordable, and proven solutions that can deliver real climate progress in the near term.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Neron Misslin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Courtney Neron Misslin