

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

Please DO NOT move HB 4046 forward.

While proponents of nuclear power claim a number of advantages, an examination of the actual record shows that these advantages do not pan out in the real world. Advocates have been talking about small modular nuclear (SMR) reactors for many years, and yet not one exists in the United States today.

As with traditional nuclear power, endless cost overruns and construction delays define any type of nuclear power. The recent collapse of the NuScale project in Idaho to build the first SMR in the United States is instructive. After many billions in subsidies from the Federal government, the people received nothing.

Nuclear power is often touted as a clean, carbon-free, source of energy. But while all forms of energy generation require energy for construction, the nuclear fuel cycle is deeply problematic and unique to nuclear energy. No other form of “clean” energy requires a fuel cycle at all, let alone one that requires mining and processing of uranium, both before AND after its use.

The primary motivator for nuclear power in Oregon is the rapidly proliferating server facilities, particularly for AI cloud services. But recent advances indicate such servers may not need anywhere near the energy current versions of AI use.

The last thing we need is a “study” funded by the very entities that want to build nuclear reactors in our state. The data is already available: nuclear reactors are too expensive, take too long to build, there is still no safe storage facility for nuclear waste, and continued efforts to build “experimental” or “test” SMRs seem suspiciously like a way to extract more subsidies from government. This is one field where Oregon does not need to be a leader.

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