



Clean water. Healthy rivers.

To: Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Re: Support SB 1597 A-Engrossed

Columbia Riverkeeper is a 25 year old organization with a mission to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River from the headwaters to the ocean and all life connected to it. We represent more than 25,000 members, including 10,000 Oregonians.

Columbia Riverkeeper supports HB 1597 A-Engrossed version which clarifies that the bill applies only to nuclear waste. While Oregon has a longstanding moratorium on new nuclear power plants in our state, we appreciate the informed leadership of Senator Fredrick to continually highlight the issue of nuclear waste, especially as we have seen more attempts to overturn our moratorium in the past few years.

Raising the issue of nuclear waste, particularly at this moment, when **Federal nuclear safeguards are being thrown out the window is especially critical.** In recent months, the federal government has accelerated its efforts at destroying national safety standards for nuclear development in the U.S. This includes secretly [rewriting nuclear safety rules](#) with industry involvement, exempting new nuclear projects from National Environmental Policy Act rules and more. It is clear that we in Oregon must protect ourselves.

Since the dawn of nuclear technologies, we have faced the challenge of what to do with nuclear waste. This problem has not been resolved. We still have no permanent federal waste repository, and we are no closer to having one than we were in 1980 when voters passed measure 7 which requires a federal waste repository and another vote of the people of the whole state before any new nuclear power reactors can be sited. Nuclear reactors, including SMNRs, produce

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radioactive waste that must be isolated from people and the environment, some for hundreds of thousands of years.

You will hear from nuclear proponents that nuclear waste can be “recycled” or “reprocessed” but this is not true. Reprocessing is costly, polluting, and produces high level waste streams that make interim and long-term storage even more difficult. It also poses a nuclear weapons proliferation risk.

You will hear that small modular nuclear reactors make less waste, but this is not the case. In fact, a [Stanford study](#) found that SMNR waste is 2-30 times the waste of the current reactors. Building new nuclear reactors means saddling generations to come with radioactive waste that we had the short-sightedness to produce.

Because there is no national waste repository, now nuclear advocates point to the so-called “consent based siting” to find communities that will accept “interim” waste to be stored in their communities. Think about this for a minute. What community would actively seek to host nuclear waste? This is a blatant attempt to do what has always been done with hazardous substances: create a sacrifice zone of low income people that will take the waste in exchange for financial assistance with community needs. We should not be putting communities in this position.

For these reasons, we urge your support for SB1597-A engrossed.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kelly Campbell".

Kelly Campbell, Policy Director
Columbia Riverkeeper

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