

Statement by the Board of Oregon PeaceWorks Regarding SB 360, HB 2692, HB 2332

Oregon PeaceWorks is a grandchild of the volunteer organization that successfully passed a statewide ballot measure in 1980 which stopped the development of new nuclear plants in Oregon. It required the existence of an operating federal repository for high-level nuclear waste and a vote of the people before new nuclear plants could be sited in Oregon. Because the nuclear industry, despite its claims during the campaign, has not been able to meet either of these criteria, this ballot measure has protected Oregonians from the dangers and high costs of pursuing nuclear-generated electricity for the past forty years.

Accordingly, Oregon PeaceWorks vehemently opposes three bills introduced into the 2021 session of the Oregon Legislature that threaten the provisions of this measure.

SB 360 and its House companion bill HB 2692 would create exceptions from both the nuclear waste and public vote provisions of the 1980 measure to allow the construction of Small Nuclear Reactors (SMRs) in Oregon. These “small” nuclear plants can be ganged together to create a full-sized nuclear power plant with the same high cost and radioactive waste problems that led to the demise of the nuclear power industry in the 1980s. These problems plague all light-water nuclear reactors regardless of their size. Because the process of mining and refining nuclear “fuel” requires a large amount of fossil fuel, and because nuclear power development absorbs funds better used to produce renewable energy, nuclear energy cannot truthfully be called “green.”

HB 2332 would entirely repeal the provisions of the 1980 ballot measure, leaving Oregonians with no protection against resumption of nuclear power development in our state.

Concerned citizens can download both a fact sheet and a legislative alert regarding these threatening bills at <http://oregonpeaceworks.org/nuclear-power/>. Please feel free to re-post, print and distribute this information.