

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33

INTRODUCED BY T. GAUTHIER

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF PRISM ADVANCED NUCLEAR REACTORS AS A REPLACEMENT FOR COAL-FIRED BOILERS.

WHEREAS, closure of coal-fired power plants will result in negative impacts on the Colstrip community, a significant negative impact on the surrounding area, and large losses in Montana tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, continued operations can be achieved by replacing coal-fired boilers with a PRISM advanced reactor, thereby utilizing all of the remaining infrastructure to produce and distribute clean, affordable electricity, safely and without carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, small, fast PRISM reactors are metal-fueled and employ passive safety and digital instrumentation control that can provide electrical output of 311 megawatts by exchanging heat between coolant and a steam generator; and

WHEREAS, the production of emission-free electricity will likely allow current generating facilities to retain a customer base in California, Washington, and Oregon, thereby mitigating the problems created by closure; and

WHEREAS, operation of a PRISM plant would provide clean, well-paying, high-tech jobs for Montana residents and their children far into the future; and

WHEREAS, Montana regulations regarding nuclear power will need to be revised and approved by Montana voters in order to enable the construction and operation of a PRISM reactor at Colstrip; and

WHEREAS, PRISM reactors can consume and destroy stockpiled spent nuclear fuel, providing a source of free fuel that can be transformed into electricity; and

WHEREAS, destruction of spent nuclear fuel with PRISM technology will result in huge cost savings to the U.S. Department of Energy by avoiding the massive costs of disposal by burial or other means; and

WHEREAS, PRISM technology has proven to be "walkaway safe" in a 24 megawatt pilot-scale reactor, meaning it can shut itself down with no need for intervention in the event of an operational upset; and

WHEREAS, a PRISM demonstration reactor at Colstrip could serve as a model for the U.S. and the world as a means to produce vast amounts of clean, affordable electricity in a safe, carbon-free manner.

1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 STATE OF MONTANA:

3 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to
4 section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to conduct a study of the feasibility of PRISM nuclear
5 power generation in order to:

6 (1) evaluate current Montana regulations that need revision in order to enable the construction and
7 operation of PRISM reactors; and

8 (2) evaluate the economic feasibility of replacing coal-fired boilers with PRISM reactors, accounting for
9 the avoided costs that would accrue with closure of coal-fired plants.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
11 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
13 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2020.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
15 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 67th Legislature.

16 - END -