

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

2 INTRODUCED BY T. GAUTHIER

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

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

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

13 WHEREAS, small advanced nuclear reactors employ passive safety and innovative designs that can
14 provide electrical input in the range of 250 megawatts to 500 megawatts by exchanging heat between coolant
15 and a steam generator; and

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

19 WHEREAS, operation of an advanced nuclear plant would provide clean, well-paying, high-tech jobs
20 for Montana residents and their children far into the future; and

21 WHEREAS, Montana regulations regarding nuclear power will need to be revised and approved by
22 Montana voters in order to enable the construction and operation of an advanced nuclear reactor at Colstrip;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, some advanced technology has proven to be "walkaway safe", meaning it can shut itself
25 down with no need for human intervention in the event of an operational upset within a given timeframe; and

26 WHEREAS, an advanced demonstration reactor at Colstrip could serve as a model for the United
27 States and the world as a means to produce vast amounts of clean, affordable electricity in a safe, carbon-free
28 manner; and

1 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy is working with industry to cultivate advanced
2 nuclear fuel innovations to provide numerous benefits, including enhanced accident tolerance, improved reactor
3 economics, greater fuel efficiency, a reduced environmental footprint, and lower used fuel volumes; and

4 WHEREAS, once developed, generation IV reactors will gain additional benefits from advanced fuel
5 innovations that include producing energy from spent nuclear fuel resulting in self-sustaining, emission-free
6 energy for millennia with unsurpassed safety; and

7 WHEREAS, advanced nuclear reactors can provide both frequency control and load-following
8 operations, serving as an ideal complement to variable sources of generation such as wind and solar; and

9 WHEREAS, the great state of Montana would substantially benefit from being a leader in the transition
10 to clean energy by supporting nuclear power.

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

14 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
15 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to study the feasibility of advanced nuclear power generation in
16 order to:

17 (1) evaluate current Montana regulations that need revision in order to enable the construction and
18 operation of advanced nuclear reactors; and

19 (2) evaluate the economic feasibility of replacing coal-fired boilers with advanced nuclear reactors
20 while accounting for the avoided costs that would result from the closure of coal-fired plants.

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

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
24 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
26 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

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