



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE FEASIBILITY OF 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 an advanced nuclear reactor, thereby utilizing all of the remaining infrastructure to produce and distribute clean, affordable electricity safely and without carbon emissions; and

WHEREAS, small advanced nuclear reactors employ passive safety and innovative designs that can provide electrical input in the range of 250 megawatts to 500 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 an advanced nuclear 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 an advanced nuclear reactor at Colstrip; and

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

WHEREAS, an advanced commercial reactor at Colstrip could serve as a model for the United States

and the world as a means to produce vast amounts of clean, affordable electricity in a safe, carbon-free manner; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) evaluate current Montana regulations that need revision in order to enable the construction and operation of advanced nuclear reactors;
- (2) evaluate the economic feasibility of replacing coal-fired boilers with advanced nuclear reactors while accounting for the avoided costs that would result from the closure of coal-fired plants; and
- (3) evaluate the safety of, and the waste stream resulting from, the construction and operation of advanced nuclear reactors and gather input from residents of the Colstrip area.

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

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

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

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SJ 3, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2021.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

INTRODUCED BY T. GAUTHIER

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