

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on State Affairs  
For SB 1404

Compiled on: Thursday, May 18, 2023 4:19 PM

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Hearing Date: May 18, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Chris Donofrio

Self / Former oil company geologist (37 years)

The Woodlands, TX

I reluctantly oppose SB 1404.

I urge you to either let it die in committee or make some minor changes.

This is a much-needed bill.

I believe strongly that its conclusions will be biased by how the work group members are selected.

I also believe that its final report will most likely be politically influenced since it is mandated for delivery by October 31, 2024.

Before the next elections.

The members are selected based on the political affiliations of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the House.

Lieutenant Governor: 1 Senator and 5 experts

Speaker of the House: 1 Representative and 5 experts

Governor: 2 higher education experts, 1 PUC, and 1 ERCOT

In addition, the Governor assigns the roles of Chair and Vice Chair.

There are no provisions to:

Contest any selected work group member.

Ensure the work group members reflect both Democrats and Republicans.

Provide public input into the work group members' selection.

Regardless of intention, SB 1404 is and will continue to be tainted by the stain of our state level Republican's already conceived conclusions on this matter.

That's a shame. As a state we need to address the most appropriate ways to move beyond fossil fuels. This includes more than coal. This includes more than nuclear power.

Why are you choosing to limit ourselves?

Texas is a great state, full of readily available resources, and the best energy-related expertise in the world.

Let's leverage this and lead the nation in identifying solutions and successfully implementing them.

I suggest 3 changes to SB 1404. If accepted, then I could support it.

1) Increase the work group members to 20.

2) Change the work group member selection process as follows:

Lieutenant Governor appoints 3 instead of 5 experts.

Senate Minority Leader appoints 1 Senator and 2 experts.

Speaker of the House appoints 3 instead of 5 experts.

House Minority Leader appoints 1 Representative and 2 experts.

Governor appoints 4, not 2, higher education members.

3) Public hearings will be conducted for all higher education and expert members nominated. The public's input will be required to be incorporated into the final selection decisions.

This addresses the lack of provisions I noted previously. The party in power will still directly control the selection of 14 workgroup members as well as the naming of Chair and Vice Chair. Now, however, the minority party has the opportunity to directly control the selection of 6 members. Finally, the public can express their opinions.

Please, consider these changes.

We need this kind of workgroup. We need it now.

We also need to remove any politically driven biases in order to establish the work group's credibility and results.

So, as of today I reluctantly oppose SB 1404.

Respectfully,

Chris J. Donofrio

Mellany Lamb  
self  
Flower Mound, TX

Texas must consider alternatives to coal and even oil and gas and go nuclear. It can be done safely and efficiently, powering our state. Thank you.

Linda Durnin  
self  
Austin, TX

Dear Senator Parker,  
I ask you to vote for SB 1404-Relating to the creation of a work group to study the benefits of coal-to-nuclear electric generating facility conversion.  
Thank you for your efforts in this matter,  
Linda Durnin  
78759

Larry Linenschmidt  
Self  
Austin, TX

Nuclear fission can provide consistent baseload for the Texas grid, particularly during key times of high demand and extreme weather, when our fleet of natural gas plants is often substantially offline due to supply and operational issues. Nuclear energy is virtually emission free once the plants are completed. Texas had been well served by the two nuclear power plants-four reactors-which have been operating for many years. It is in our best interest to move forward with new nuclear plants, particularly the Small Modular Nuclear Reactors which are moving towards scalability.

TerraPower has announced plans to build its Natrium reactor near a retiring coal plant in Kemmerer, Wyoming. This is an incredible opportunity for the state of Wyoming, which can be duplicated in Texas. According to the U.S. Department of Energy (<https://www.energy.gov/ne/articles/next-gen-nuclear-plant-and-jobs-are-coming-wyoming>), the Natrium design represents the future of advanced nuclear reactor technology and is well-suited to provide clean and efficient power to communities across the United States.

The U.S. Department of Energy reports it plans to invest nearly \$2 billion to support the licensing, construction and demonstration of this first-of-a-kind reactor by 2028.

Let's bring investment in new nuclear reactors to Texas to increase the stability and reliability of the ERCOT Grid and to reduce emissions.

I urge members of this committee to vote for this bill.

Larry Linenschmidt, Executive Director  
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Jordan Robison  
Natura Resources  
Abilene, TX

My name is Jordan Robison. I am submitting testimony on behalf of Natura Resources, LLC, and we greatly support the passage of Senate Bill 1404.

In full disclosure, Natura has been working with a consortium of universities that includes The University of Texas, Texas A&M, Abilene Christian University, and Georgia Tech on researching and developing technology related to small modular nuclear reactors. In particular, molten salt nuclear reactors. You should know that Abilene Christian University has submitted a construction permit application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the construction of a molten salt nuclear research reactor that would be located at Abilene Christian University. My reason for not being able to testify in person is that we currently have 13 staff from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Abilene to review the construction permit application with Natura and the university consortium.

Natura commends Senator Parker and Representative Smithee for bringing this bill. This issue is a real and present danger to the grid and to Texas citizens. That said, the deployment of small modular nuclear reactors at retiring coal power generation plants would allow the plants to stay open and continue providing electricity while significantly reducing carbon emissions. This presents a real opportunity for the grid and Texas citizens.

Think of it in these terms. The carbon-free heat from the small modular nuclear reactor replaces the heat previously generated by the burning of coal. That heat then generates the steam that turns the turbines to make electricity. The existing plant continues to operate. The jobs associated with the plant continue. The local property taxes continue to provide revenues to the county. The Coletto Creek Coal plant in Senator Kolkhorst and Representative Morrison's district is a good example of the issue. The Coletto Creek coal plant has a nameplate generation capacity of 622 megawatts. It is our understanding that the plant is currently scheduled for closure in 2027. So those 622 megawatts will be lost. All the jobs at that plant will be lost. Additionally, it is our understanding that 50% or more of Goliad County's property tax revenue comes from that plant and that revenue will be lost when the plant closes.

There are many other examples around the state.

We think it is good public policy and good energy policy to put knowledgeable people in a room to study the issue and make recommendations to the legislature on how best to address the issue.

We believe that small modular nuclear reactors are going to be a reality faster than many believe.

We believe this study is a good first step in helping Texas become a leader in the country and the world in the application of small modular nuclear reactors.

We would ask you to vote for the bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Jordan Robison, P.E.  
VP of Engineering & Program Management  
JordanRobison@naturaresources.org  
Natura