

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on State Affairs
For HB 14

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Hearing Date: March 19, 2025 8:00 AM

Lloyd Hunnicutt
Self
Lubbock, TX

Nuclear power is the only real clean power out there. There is nothing green about solar or wind energy. Neither form will ever offset the amount of power to build or construct these sites. I worked in power generation for 26 years, (natural gas), and natural gas and nuclear are the clear good options for generation of power in Texas. France gets a significant portion of its power from nuclear and the plants are all the same design, which makes it simple to move workers from one site to another. This is what Texas needs to do.

Catherine Croom, Ms.
self - retired teacher
Bulverde, TX

I OPPOSE HB 14. HB 14 gives away taxpayer dollars to the nuclear industry without making sure that they provide safe, reliable and clean energy. Nuclear energy has always been risky, expensive and polluting, with routine radionuclide emissions. HB 14 is giveaways to the nuclear industry with few or no restrictions. In order to receive funding HB 14 should require:

- 1) That investors guarantee payment of a sizable portion of project costs.
- 2) Decommissioning funds must be in place to clean up accidents, leaks and radioactive contamination.
- 3) No nuclear facilities should be licensed or built until a national underground permanent repository is in place to accept deadly nuclear waste.
- 4) Projects must put energy onto the grid and not be just for private companies.
- 5) Nuclear projects must be complete and in operation before grants are disbursed.

Gabriel Ivory
Nuclear Advocacy Resource Organization
Sugar Land, TX

I am writing to express my support for HB 14 - Texas Advanced Nuclear Deployment Act. I believe this bill is an important step to advance Texas' position as the nationwide leader in energy, pioneering the commercial deployment of advanced nuclear energy systems.

Advanced nuclear technology offers a unique opportunity to strengthen Texas' energy grid with a stable, carbon-free power source that complements the state's existing energy portfolio. Modern reactors incorporate passive safety systems, reducing the risk of operational failures and enhancing public confidence in nuclear energy. By streamlining regulatory processes and fostering private investment, this bill will create jobs, drive economic growth, and position Texas as a leader in the next generation of clean energy development.

I hope you will take my testimony into consideration, and I urge you to support HB 14 and advocate for policies that enable Texas to harness the full potential of advanced nuclear energy. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to securing a resilient and sustainable energy future for our state.

Elyse Tirone
Self
Austin, TX

The support of nuclear reactors cannot come soon enough! Texas wants to lead the way in all things business and what better way than to lead in not only the liquid fuels sector but also in renewable energy. Nuclear energy is a proven technology that has incredible amounts of stored energy and potential. We have learned from the incidents of the past and can build reactors with the lessons in mind. As a state we have seen fires, increasing temperatures, and droughts and it is time we focus on proven renewable technology!

Pat Bulla, Ms.

self; retired

Austin, TX

House Bill 14 by Harris would give OUR tax dollars to private developers of advanced nuclear reactors. Developers of these unproven nuclear reactor designs would be eligible for up to \$200 million per reactor via grants – not loans that would have to be paid back – made by the governor’s office from the Texas Energy Fund. Nuclear is too expensive and financially (and otherwise) risky. The committee should say ”no” to both, which would give our tax dollars to private developers of nuclear reactors.

HB 14 is all giveaways and no guardrails. The following should be required but fails to do. Before funding, HB 14 should require:

- (a) HB 14 should require an investors guarantee payment of a sizable portion of project costs.
- (b) decommissioning funds absolutely must be in place to clean up accidents, leaks and radioactive contamination.
- (c) no nuclear facilities should be licensed or built until a national underground permanent repository is in place to accept deadly nuclear waste.
- (d) energy projects must put energy onto the grid and not be just for private companies.
- (e) nuclear projects must be complete and in operation before grants are disbursed.

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- (d) energy projects must put energy onto the grid and not be just for private companies.
- (e) nuclear projects must be complete and in operation before grants are disbursed.

Carolyn Croom, Ms.

self, retired

Austin, TX

Dear Chair and Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

HB 14 and HJR 8 would create a huge taxpayer-funded handout to the nuclear industry, an industry that has proven in seventy years that it can't produce a reasonably-priced, on-time, safe product, without a big mess to clean up, and without subsidies. Texas approved the construction of four nuclear reactors at two sites leading to billions of dollars in costly overruns and years of delays, which led our state to utility deregulation. And consumers are still paying for these cost overruns in their electric bills. Our state needs to learn from this and make nuclear power compete in the open energy market.

A report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis quotes the CEOs of three different energy companies, as well as a 2023 U.S. Air Force study, on the bad financial risks of proposed small modular reactors. An example of the concerns with financial risk is expressed by John Ketchum, Chairman, CEO and President of NextEra Energy. NextEra owns seven nuclear plants, and is the world's largest electric utility holding company by market capitalization. He states, "... I'm very skeptical with regard to SMRs. They are going to be very expensive and then you're going to be taking a bet on the technology. Right now, I look at SMRs as an opportunity to lose money in smaller batches." Instead, he stated that NextEra will continue with its rapid buildout of wind, solar and battery storage with no mention of new nuclear.

Some states in the U.S. do not allow new nuclear plants to be licensed or built without a national, underground, permanent, high-level waste repository in place, and I would like to see Texas adopt that position. In any case, adding nuclear power commits us to immense and unknown future costs to manage the waste. Certainly our state shouldn't risk taxpayer money on such a financially risky business.

Nuclear reactors routinely release radiation into the air and water. A recent meta-analysis of worldwide studies shows significantly higher risks for all cancers, thyroid cancer, and leukemia among residents living within 30 km of nuclear power plants, especially in children under 5 years old, and significantly higher risks for mesothelioma for nuclear plant workers. Some SMR proposals pose extra safety risks because their proponents are proposing reactor designs already found to be unsound or unsafe decades ago.

Do right by Texas taxpayers and vote "no" on HB 14 and HJR 8. Thank you.

Abigail Stanhouse

Self

Houston, TX

Please consider expansion of power alternatives for Texas.

Cooper Christiancy

Self

Austin, TX

I am writing in opposition to HB 14 because it would establish a program to funnel massive sums of public money into subsidies for a single energy industry—bankrolling unproven and risky nuclear projects without effective provisions for ensuring that these expansive subsidies serve the public interest. I urge the Committee to vote "No" on HB 14.

Karen Hadden

Texas Nuclear Watchdogs

Austin, TX

Dear Chairman and State Affairs Committee Members,

I'm Karen Hadden. I oppose HB 14 and am testifying today as a member of Texas Nuclear Watchdogs. Texans want energy that is safe, clean, reliable, and affordable. Nuclear power doesn't fit the bill, and is the most expensive way to generate electricity. It's not the flexible, dispatchable, affordable energy that we need, and it would create more dangerous nuclear waste.

Regardless of whether you support nuclear energy or not, HB 14 is a bad bill. A \$2 billion giveaway of our tax dollars to the nuclear industry and investors. There are no requirements to pay back the money if projects fail.

Safety and financial standards should be required by the bill. Funding for nuclear research and projects should not be approved without some guardrails and protective standards in place.

However, the bill is all giveaways and no guardrails. Funding could be wasted on half-baked projects, on unproven reactors to benefit wealthy investors, at taxpayer expense, even reimbursing previous billionaire investments.

Many of the small modular reactor (SMR) designs being promoted today are not new. They're derived from plans the Atomic Energy Commission scrapped decades ago - because they didn't work and were too expensive. Both Westinghouse and Babcock & Wilcox abandoned small modular reactor projects due to financial failure.

NuScale's widely touted small modular reactor (SMR) collapsed in 2023 due to cost overruns and customer cancellations. The dismal failure prompted company CEO John Hopkins to say, "once you're on a dead horse, you dismount quickly." The NuScale's experience serves as a clear warning to SMR investors.

Strong standards and accountability are sorely lacking in HB 14.

Some reactor projects don't yet have Nuclear Regulatory Commission design approval. Yet they could receive taxpayer-funded grants. Millions of dollars could be wasted on projects that aren't viable from the start.

The bill should include requirements that must be met before grants can be authorized. Nuclear projects should:

- 1) Have guaranteed investors for a sizable portion of project costs.
- 2) Have decommissioning funds to be used to clean up accidents, leaks and radioactive contamination.
- 3) Be required to put energy onto the grid and not provide it just for private companies.
- 4) Be completed before they can receive state grants.
- 5) Be required to have containment structures.
- 6) Not be licensed or built until a national underground permanent repository is in place to accept deadly nuclear waste.
- 7) Assure financial transparency and full public disclosure to prevent corruption schemes.

Without these guardrails, the bill is just a giveaway, as opposed to a sincere attempt to move nuclear technology forward.

We shouldn't just hand out billions of dollars to nuclear investors. Just because they want it. This bill would cut out a huge chunk of the Texas Energy Fund, which was set up for various types of electric generators,

Armond Cohen, CEO

Clean Air Task Force

Austin, TX

March 19 House State Affairs Committee Meeting

Testimony Provided by Armond Cohen, CEO of Clean Air Task Force

Introduction

Good morning, Chairman King and members of the committee. My name is Armond Cohen, CEO of Clean Air Task Force, and I have over 40 years' experience with nuclear technology. I also want to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony this morning on an important piece of nuclear legislation.

Our pragmatic, results-oriented environmental organization is dedicated to advancing sensible energy policies through innovation and technology. Our primary motivation is to see cleaner air and emissions reductions, but we recognize the importance of affordable, reliable energy to economic prosperity and national security. By supporting practical, technology-driven policies, we aim to protect our environment without compromising economic growth or affordable power.

Key Benefits of Nuclear Energy

We support nuclear energy because of its ability to meet growing energy demand, with low air emissions and minimal land use and to provide reliable firm dispatchable power and industrial heat.

Energy Growth – Texas's energy demand is growing. ERCOT has projected load growth to as much as double in the next decade due to electrification, growing population, and digital infrastructure. Nuclear can bring online significant power capacity, serving as many as 700,000 households with each plant, from small sites of just a few hundred acres.

Reliability – Wind and solar energy are important contributors to the Texas grid but can vary dramatically over multiple days and often weeks, beyond what battery storage can compensate for. Nuclear energy offers energy diversity and unmatched dispatchability, running continuously regardless of weather conditions, and strengthening the resilience of our grid.

Clean Power – Nuclear energy produces minimal emissions during operation, contributing to cleaner air and helping large loads achieve their clean power goals.

Position on HB 14

Nuclear energy holds significant promise for Texas – not just in clean power generation but also in supporting economic growth, manufacturing, and workforce development. However, substantial upfront costs and financial uncertainties have slowed progress in new nuclear development. Clean Air Task Force supports HB 14 because it offers funding mechanisms to derisk early plant deployment with accountability, directly addressing these barriers and accelerating the deployment of new nuclear energy in Texas.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony this morning. I welcome any questions.

Brice Jackson

Self

Houston, TX

I support the funding for nuclear reactor deployment in Texas. It provides an alternative means to abundant energy besides relying heavily on O&G. Reactor deployment also opens new and diverse employment opportunities for residents where the economy may be saturated by a single industry.

Phillip Spenrath, County Judge

Wharton County

Wharton, TX

RE: Letter in SUPPORT of House Bill 14 (Harris)

Dear Chair and Members of the State Affairs Committee,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 14 (HB 14), introduced by Representative Harris, which seeks to establish funding mechanisms within the Office of the Governor and the Texas Public Utility Commission for deploying advanced nuclear reactors in Texas.

As a participant in Governor Abbott's Nuclear Study Group, I have witnessed the importance of advanced nuclear energy for Texas' future. HB 14 is a critical step toward meeting our growing energy needs while providing a clean, reliable, and sustainable power supply. By supporting technologies such as small modular reactors and microreactors, this bill will complement renewable energy sources and strengthen our energy grid.

Wharton County, where I serve as County Judge, is home to Wharton County Junior College, which has operated one of the top nuclear workforce development programs in the nation for 18 years. This program is vital for training the next generation of nuclear professionals and aligns directly with HB 14's goals of advancing nuclear technology and workforce development. The collaboration outlined in the bill will further Texas' leadership in nuclear energy.

Section 2 of HB 14 emphasizes leveraging institutions like Wharton County Junior College to create a strategic plan for advancing nuclear energy in the state. This approach will build on existing successes and expand them statewide.

I strongly support HB 14 and urge the committee to pass it, as it will enhance Texas' energy security and create high-quality jobs and economic opportunities for our Mighty Lone Star State.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Phillip Spenrath

Wharton County - County Judge

Tom "Smitty" Smith, Mr
Austin, Texas self-retired
Austin, TX

Testimony against HB 14
by Tom "Smitty" Smith

Smitty is the retired director of Public Citizen's Texas office. As a consumer advocate working primarily before the Public Utility Commission, he's had a front row seat to the debates about nuclear energy and ratepayer bill increases for over 40 years

Proposed Texas Advanced Nuclear Power Plan is a Big Giveaway without Guardrails
Texas history shows us that nuclear power costs too much, does too little, takes too long and is too risky

The Texas Capitol is being overrun by nuclear power salesmen promoting "new advanced" nuclear reactors. They are selling the fantasy that if we just invest a lot of taxpayer money now, Texas will become the leader in manufacturing a whole new generation of small nuclear reactors that will be cheaper.

There are five major problems with this plan:

1. Radiation from nuclear power can cause cancers, birth defects and deaths
2. After 70 years of searching, we still have no permanent repository for nuclear waste.
3. Many of the proposed reactor designs don't have containment vessels, buildings to protect people from deadly radiation.
4. Some of the proposed reactor designs were rejected as too dangerous back in the 1950's.
5. Many of the 80 small modular reactors proposals worldwide have been abandoned due to cost and safety concerns. Only 3 were in operation in 2023, in Russia, China and India.

We've seen nuclear promises before. In the early 1980's Texans were promised that if we just built nuclear power plants, they would generate electricity at a lower cost than other sources. It wasn't true. Texas nuclear reactors were completed years late and costs skyrocketed by five-fold for South Texas Project's and 11 times for Comanche Peak reactors, which took 19 years to complete. Many Texas ratepayers are still paying for cost overruns on their utility bills.

New modular reactors are a bad idea that should be halted. If new reactors are to be built, there must be guidelines:

- Require all new reactors to have adequate decommissioning funds to remove and dispose of nuclear waste and clean up contamination.
- Don't permit any additional nuclear plants to be built until a national underground permanent nuclear waste repository in place.
- Local first responders must be adequately trained, funded, and equipped to respond to an accident involving nuclear reactors and radiation releases. Evacuation plans must be developed.
- Containment structures should be required to isolate radioactive materials and limit radiation releases from accidents or leaks.
- Require the PUC to set up bi-annual reviews to compare the costs of advanced nuclear reactors to other types of generation and cancel grants for projects with out-of-control costs.

There are reasons nuke builders want government handouts. They cost too much, take too long, do too little and are too risky. Please vote no on HB 14 or to add some guardrails to the program.

George Brian Vachris, P.E.
self
Humble, TX

FOR HB 14. I might add that larger power plants drive larger turbines, that have a higher moment of inertia to help stabilize the frequency control of the grid. I am pleased that this bill includes larger pressurized water reactors (proven technology).

Carter Linville

self

Austin, TX

Fully in favor. Texas needs to develop a pipeline for safe, reliable nuclear power advancement. Texas is uniquely set up in the united states to be a leader because of the independence of our gross and on demand power needs a summers get consistently hotter. More and more businesses move to Texas, bringing future demand in manufacturing and technology development spaces. We cannot let those successes be achieved by putting Texan citizens into dangerous black-outs and brown-outs. We must invest in infrastructure. We must invest in the infrastructure and workforce development of the future.

David Lester

Self, retired

Plano, TX

I fully support this housebill

Monica Garcia

Self, Attorney

Midland, TX

The bill fails to account for reactors in regions that include critical infrastructure and jurisdictions that have voiced their opposition to such projects. The bill lacks specificity and is too generalized in describing grant funding and repayment, and it should NOT be exempt from the Texas Public Information Act. When expending public funds, such as this bill intends to do, there is a requirement that state actors be transparent and accountable to the public. Confidential information can be redacted, and the Attorney General's office provides a means of ensuring that information not subject to disclosure remain confidential.

John Jennings, MR

Employee of The University of Texas

Austin, TX

I would like to voice my support on HB14 and HJR8. I am an 8th generation Texan and very proud that our state leads the nation in all energy technologies. I believe nuclear power has the potential to help the world and provide wealth and jobs to Texas at a scale never seen before.

jorge hernandez

Self

San Antonio, TX

Would like to see this funded. This will strengthen our power grid

Lawrence Jacobi

Self - Nuclear Engineer and Attorney

Austin, TX

I fully support passage of the bill.

Gabriela Resendez

Self / engineer in chemical manufacturing

Houston, TX

I am for nuclear power in Texas.

Robert Holcomb

Self

Cedar Park, TX

As a graduate of the US Navy Nuclear program and a Radiation Safety professional for 30+ years, I strongly recommend that the State of Texas take a leadership position in this important field of power generation. A large increase in stable, sustainable, affordable electricity for the Texas grid is paramount to meet current and future electrical load that a robust economy will require. Currently there are no other viable energy substitutes to fossil fuels which makes nuclear power generation an attractive alternative.

The source of materials for radioactive medical pharmaceuticals have been largely outsourced abroad, and shortages have been seen multiple times over the last few years. The new reactors can be designed with medical isotope production in mind.

In addition to the above reasons, the reclamation of US manufacturing and the implementation of AI will require even more electrical support, and Texas can be at the center of those industries. The economic benefits of hi-paying jobs (Engineering, Construction, Fabrication, etc), increase in the technical skill-sets of the citizenry, and the added commercial infrastructure will all benefit the State for years to come.

Please support legislation to promote nuclear research, nuclear reactors, and nuclear power generation in our State.

Thank you for your time and consideration, RD Holcomb

Danielle Zigon

Mothers For Nuclear - Texas Chapter Lead

Austin, TX

Support: FOR this bill on behalf of Mothers for Nuclear, TX Chapter Lead

I had my daughter, Eve, January 16, 2021; exactly one month later Winter Storm Uri froze the state. As a new mother, I remember wondering if my one-month old was more like to freeze to death in her bassinet or suffocate in my arms if I slept with her under a blanket in the rocking chair. As a nuclear engineer and oil and gas engineer, I vowed to do what I could to make sure this never happened to any other young family again because energy security is the lynchpin for prosperity and economic development for Texans.

In my roles with the Texas Advanced Nuclear Working Group and University of Texas at Austin's Nuclear Engineering program, I've had the honor of being on the frontlines of commercial nuclear power deployment recommendations for Texas over the past year. I am NOT submitting on behalf of these organizations, but these experiences also shaped my following suggestions for improvement:

- This policy should be extended to include thermal power. Rewrite here: "(2)??"Advanced nuclear reactor project" means an electric or THERMAL POWER generation facility relying on an advanced nuclear reactor to generate power."
- Most of the big ticket long lead items (LLI) would be built outside of the US. The bill should incentivize LLI's built in Texas through some kind of multiplier. This both jumpstarts our supply chain economy here and keeps Texans' money in Texans' pocketbooks.
- Research reactors should be included in this provided they are part of a documented commercial model to reduce the overall costs to taxpayers to deploy a commercial reactor. Examples of this include Natura Resources LLC which is smartly building a research reactor first to settle FOAK data requirements to the NRC in an economically efficient manner.
- A state-based matching program would be an excellent way to encourage offtaker financing earlier in the project beyond PPA agreements. A great example of how this could work is included in the Working Group Report on state matching for developers and offtakers that execute a qualified PPA agreement for a state nuclear.
- Completion Bonus: In its current state, it does not incentivize new project siting decisions to be made in Texas in the near-term. There is too much uncertainty in what that upside ceiling is per MWh for offtakers to make bankable decisions. This is a section of the bill that, in its current state, will not get more power to our grid in the time ERCOT says we need it. Banning this or providing more clarity on the mechanism would help it be more impactful.
- The state should also consider how over-incentivizing "any permit application" submitted to the NRC could lead to inefficient market dynamics where developers seek ESPA's because it will take less time to write/ submit even though a COLA could be the most efficient path to getting electrons on the grid for certain projects.

Lucinda Farrokh

Self—retired

Austin, TX

This is a bill that should be voted on by citizens! It should not be at the discretion of a few government officials.