



April 6th, 2026

The Honorable Isaac G. Bryan
 Chair, Committee on Natural Resources
 1020 N Street, Room 164
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2647 (Calderon) Energy: nuclear facilities: advanced nuclear reactors: OPPOSE

Dear Chair Bryan:

The undersigned organizations write to inform you of our opposition to AB 2647 (Calderon), a bill that seeks to exempt nuclear reactors that receive a design license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) on or after January 1st, 2005 from the decades-long statewide prohibition on the certification of new nuclear fission power plants. As amended, this bill would effectively repeal California's moratorium on new nuclear power plants, allowing for conventional reactors, small modular reactors (SMRs), and advanced reactors (such as non-light-water reactors or NLWRs) to be built in the state.

Importantly, the condition for California's originally instituted [prohibition](#) on new nuclear power plants in 1976 was that it remain in place until the US government approves a demonstrated technological means to safely and permanently dispose of high-level nuclear waste. Notably, 50 years later, no such disposal system exists, and all the nuclear waste generated by nuclear reactors would only add to the state's existing nuclear waste storage problem. California achieved a significant legal victory when the statewide moratorium was upheld by the Supreme Court in

1983, and the moratorium is currently the state's last defense against the deployment of potentially unsafe, experimental nuclear reactors within its borders. AB 2647 would remove that barrier and pre-empt the ability of Californians to protect themselves from the safety and security risks that will result from the massive deregulatory effort currently underway at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), the federal body with preemptive authority over nuclear power plant safety and security. California should not undertake such a drastic move in repealing the statewide prohibition due to the serious consequences that could arise from such a reversal for the health, safety, and security of our residents and the environment.

The increase in deregulatory efforts the United States is witnessing is a concerning and growing trend. In May 2025, the President issued [an executive order](#) completely overhauling the Nuclear Regulatory Commission by means of staff reductions, reduced application review timelines, along with a "wholesale revision of its regulations." Another executive order directed the Department of Energy to quickly develop advanced reactors, with Department of Government Efficiency staff indicating the NRC would be expected to [rubber stamp](#) approval of these new reactors. Yet more concerns were raised recently with the federal administration considering a proposal to [give away weapons-grade plutonium](#) to nuclear startups, most of which have untested designs. Already, the NRC has adopted [rules](#) and [procedures](#) that would allow certain small modular reactors to be located in densely populated areas, yet would exempt their owners from any responsibility for off-site emergency planning, saddling state and local authorities with the entire burden of preparing for and responding to nuclear accidents. It is also [pursuing rollbacks](#) of its licensing regulations to facilitate rapid deployment of untested designs with shortened environmental reviews and little opportunity for public input. In this increasingly chaotic and clearly unsafe regulatory environment, it is hard to imagine a more dangerous moment for California to allow new nuclear reactors to be built in the state.

Concerns surrounding new nuclear generation are not limited to a single technology; rather, Union of Concerned Scientists' (UCS) research indicates serious safety concerns for many of the so-called "advanced" reactor designs of all sizes now being pursued and eligible under AB 2647, which include new SMR and NLWR technologies. Recent rhetoric surrounding NLWRs [by proponents](#) often alludes to new, innovative features that reduce cost and waste, and increase safety and efficiency. However, NLWRs are not new or innovative, but rather designs that have been around for decades, [tested and failed](#) in various demonstration projects in the United States, before being discontinued altogether. NLWRs are [significantly less safe](#) than conventional reactors, and do not offer improvements in design, waste production, or risks surrounding terroristic threat. Although some NLWRs may offer more efficiency in uranium use, new [safety risks](#) associated with these technologies do not outweigh potential efficiencies, especially when considering the higher risks of explosion, meltdown, and uncontrollable burns that these technologies carry.

AB 2647 would also make eligible SMRs, which are nuclear reactors that generate 300 or less megawatts of electrical capacity per unit. Being smaller, however, does not reduce their risks. [Research](#) has long indicated that, contrary to industry talking points, SMRs are not generally safer than conventional reactors. Depending on design, siting, and licensing considerations, SMRs may even pose greater risks of radiological exposure to surrounding communities than currently operating reactors. SMRs will also produce [more expensive electricity](#) than larger reactors because of diseconomies of scale, and history has shown that new designs will not reliably operate until they can accumulate decades of operating experience. Combining this troubling fact with the

realization that more nuclear power is more than likely not needed in California for grid reliability purposes, due to the advancements made in building out renewable, clean technologies such as wind and solar combined with energy storage, it becomes clear AB 2647 is [untimely and not necessary](#).

California should continue investing in renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, while strengthening grid reliability with firm, non-intermittent sources such as geothermal and battery storage, and not create pathways for nuclear projects that are costly and dangerous to residents in the state. For these reasons, we respectfully oppose AB 2647. The risks of removing this critical prohibition tool that protects California from the mercy of a federal agency with ever-weaker safety and health standards are far too great, and we urge the committee to reject this bill.

Sincerely,

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CEO

Climate Resolve

Mary Beth Brangan

Founder, Director

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Andrew Christie

President

California Land Watch

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