

## Alyssa Quintyne

I would like to submit my comment to strongly oppose the siting of any nuclear microreactors in the state of Alaska. Nation-wide, and even internationally, agencies and governments are shutting down their nuclear plants to diversify to fully renewable energy sources. Though the technology for micro-reactors is more advanced and safer than older nuclear reactors, the risks and lack of adequate state regulation and remediation for uranium mining, the transportation, storage, and waste management of those minerals puts all of us, and the lands, waters, and animals we depend on at risk. Other impacts of nuclear radiation, waste heat, nuclear waste storage, and land acquired for such projects all pose threats to air, water, soil quality, permafrost melt, and safe access and use of our roads, public lands and recreation, housing, agriculture, tourism, and overall communal well-being and safety. Additionally, the technology for micro-reactors are still experimental. To scale a reactor for a city to use and benefit from the electricity it produces, it will take 5 years to test the reactor, and then another 10 years to scale it up for locals to use it. In 15 years, our energy needs and infrastructure will be drastically different. Waste heat, as it's named, will not produce enough to provide an economically feasible or equitable heating alternative either. We currently do not have the infrastructure or policies to truly transition to natural gas. We're not going to have that for micro-reactors either, which leaves residents, our industries, and our environment vulnerable to the shortsightedness, gaps, and inequities of our government and company in instilling this new technology as a resource. Nuclear Micro-Reactors are cool and all, but they do not and will not meet the energy and heating needs of Alaskans.

Those impacts are rarely accounted for in projects' economic feasibility studies and environmental impact statements, nor are residents that will be near and supposedly benefit from these projects are rarely consulted before these projects are approved. This shows a dangerous lack of consideration for the residents whom this agency serves.

As your agency is well aware, the state of Alaska has a long legacy of inadequate vetting and management of extractive companies and their projects that have resulted in millions of pounds of pollutants, spills, and contamination directly into our air, water, and soil. Every single hard rock mine in Alaska, with all current regulations and restrictions under the law, has had multiple reports of spills and contamination. Every single one. This includes uranium mining, which is critical for micro-reactors. Companies are not adequately held responsible for those incidents, the state gets to keep any bonds paid, and residents have their entire livelihoods changed without any reparations or remediation from the state or companies involved. I live in Interior Alaska, where mismanaged military activity and mining contributed to the nuclear waste sites in Ester, Goldstream, Fort. Wainwright, Eielson, Fort. Greely, Salcha, and North Pole. There are still lots out in North Pole and Salcha that you cannot buy the land or grown on the land because of nuclear and bio-waste. There are still military dependents and servicemen who are living with heart and liver conditions, caused by the nuclear contamination they were exposed to in the early 2000's. Folks that live in Ester and Goldstream still have to buy water filters because of the water pollution caused by mining in the region. Our state barely has an adequate public transportation and infrastructure budget. We can barely get our legislature and municipal governments to maintain our roads and houses for our residents enough where we function and live. But we suddenly have the funds, staff, and capacity to support micro-reactors? People can't even afford homes, nor any upgrades to newer, more efficient energies without major federal subsidies and community-led energy initiatives that re-center the actually needs and funds of the communities. How are we as residents suppose to trust our

government and these companies when we are not part of the decision-making and the impacts we are already facing are never considered in the first place? A public comment period, while appreciated, is not adequate. How can we trust this process when neither the state nor company will take responsibility for the contamination that is already affecting our health, food, and jobs, and we are left to figure things out and pay for the damages ourselves? How are microreactors going to help us with our energy sources when we do not have the roads, housing, or infrastructure to support it? How are we suppose to trust these projects when there is still no adequate state regulations around transportation of minerals and waste, storage, duration and scale of projects, or direct financial investments to impacted residents and businesses? When the state and nuclear companies still haven't cleaned up the contamination sites from 40 years ago, and have provided no reparations to those who had to relocate or have health issues? It is unconscionable to approve new nuclear projects without repairing and addressing those gaps and impacts first.

Until those are addressed, I urge this agency to re-focus its efforts to actual renewable energy sources like solar, wind, hydro, \*geo-thermal\* that pose a faaaaaaar less risk to residents and the things we depend on, and will not take 10 years to scale. I urge this agency to work closely with the legislature and Governor to consider updating legislation and regulation around extractive projects to have required consultation and approval by residents for projects to move forward, and to require remedial and repartition plan to residents (not just the state) in the event of contamination or detriment.