



ALLIANCE FOR NUCLEAR RESPONSIBILITY

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For Immediate Release:

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Proposed CPUC Decision in Diablo Canyon Decommissioning case confirms the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility's recommendations

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) finally released a Proposed Decision approving the 2019 Settlement Agreement between PG&E, the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility (A4NR) and multiple intervenors regarding the ratepayer costs for decommissioning the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant. PG&E's original request of \$4.8 billion has been pruned by nearly a billion dollars to \$3.9 billion.

\$300 million of those ratepayer savings are attributable to the Decision's confirmation that PG&E will seek a vendor to "enable the final offload of spent fuel from the Unit 1 and Unit 2 spent fuel pools within 4 years of the shutdown..." PG&E had previously insisted on a 7-year timeline for this work, but A4NR, through tenacious cross-examination and exhaustive testimony clearly demonstrated that this safety enhancing and money saving option was the right choice. As an extra benefit, the physical decommissioning of the reactor units can begin earlier, hastening the eventual restoration of the site.

"We are pleased to have achieved these savings for ratepayers as we bring the nuclear power era in California to a safe closure," commented A4NR executive director Rochelle Becker. "Our attention and oversight now turn to the California Energy Commission as they become our eyes and ears in evaluating these proposals and bids for the expedited transfer of the spent nuclear fuel."

Other issues settled in the case include PG&E's determination of a decommissioning contracting strategy, anticipated before the end of the year. Options include: PG&E does the work internally; hiring an outside contractor; or a hybrid method. This choice has ramifications for the local reactor community—including workforce, liability and oversight issues—and has led to contentious legal challenges at reactor sites in other states. A4NR will be monitoring these developments.

Likewise, A4NR also supported the proposal's decision to keep the facility's breakwaters intact (saving \$400 million) and to extend the Diablo Canyon Independent Safety Committee's role until such time as all the spent fuel has been moved from wet pools to dry storage.

The Proposed Decision can be downloaded at: <http://a4nr.org/?p=4174>

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THE SACRAMENTO BEE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

California forum letters: Bee readers take on Destiny Church, Diablo Canyon, recall

BY THE SACRAMENTO BEE LETTER WRITERS
AUGUST 09, 2021 10:07 AM



DIABLO IS DONE

[“To fulfill promises of Diablo Canyon closure, California ignores fossil fuel emissions,”](#)
(sacbee.com, July 23)

Regardless of inexcusable delay and inaction by the California Public Utilities on replacement energy scenarios, Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant won't be resurrected. Restarting from scratch would face years of studies; state and federal permitting and contentious hearings. Unit 2's expensive main generator replacement failed repeatedly in 2020, working only 30% of that year. PG&E estimates that Diablo cost ratepayers \$1.25 billion in annual above-market costs in 2020.

While there is much planning and evaluation needed to secure California's emissions-free electricity future, nuclear power from Diablo Canyon will not be in that mix.

David Weisman, legislative director, Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility Legal Fund

Read more here: <https://www.sacbee.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article253328313.html#storylink=cpy>

Without opining on the various energy replacement strategies and schedules now ordered by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility reiterates that extending the life of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant is not an option.

The CPUC has known these megawatts were going to be phased out since retirement was proposed in 2016, and affirmed by their decision in 2018. That a replacement procurement order appears this late—and only upon entering a second summer of energy uncertainty—represents cascading inactions on the part of the gubernatorial appointees who lead that agency, not to mention the California Energy Commission and the California Independent System Operator.

Regardless of replacement scenarios, the following holds true: Diablo Canyon cannot be resurrected beyond the NRC license expiration dates in 2024/2025.

First, PG&E has made it quite clear that they have no interest in operating the facility beyond those dates. No third party has made a “bid” for the facility, nor would any who consulted with competent engineers and accountants.

Second, in April 2018 (per the U.S. Federal Register), *“PG&E requested withdrawal of its license renewal application, including all associated correspondence and commitments, for DCPP, Unit Nos. 1 and 2.”* Any subsequent attempt at NRC relicensing will require an entirely new environmental analysis, permitting procedures, CPUC approval of renewal funding, and be subject to likely years of contentious adjudicatory hearings, with no certainty for a positive outcome.

Third, there is no guarantee of “steady baseload power” from a 40-year-old nuclear power plant. Unit 2’s failed main generator was replaced for nearly \$100 million dollars in 2019, but failed again in 2020, working only 30% of that year and narrowly squeaking by during the peak load energy crunches. The complex and costly repairs of aging systems are likely to multiply in the ensuing years.

Finally, Diablo is too expensive, with \$1.25 billion in annual above-market costs estimated by PG&E for 2020. Over a decade (minus inflation), that’s \$12.5 billion – or 62.5% of PG&E’s proposal to underground distribution lines over the next 10 years. Combined with purchases of renewable energy and storage, are there not better values for California’s energy customers?

While there is still much planning and evaluation needed in order to secure California’s emissions-free electricity future, nuclear power from Diablo Canyon will not be in that mix.

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