

Scientists: Shuttering Diablo Canyon "Will Make it Impossible to Meet California's Clean Air Goals"

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Palo Alto – A group of experts in the fields of climate change, physics, and energy filed testimony today at the California Public Utilities Commission in opposition to the proposed closure of the state's last nuclear facility, Diablo Canyon Power Plant. After examining proposals for "replacement procurement" - the sources of electricity owner Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) claims will be available to take its place - the group concluded the closure of Diablo Canyon would make it impossible for California to meet its clean-air goals, and would likely result in sharply higher electrical rates for residents. Among the group providing expert testimony were:

- Dr. Alexander Cannara, Ph.D., a Stanford-educated engineer & mathematician, and an expert on energy choices, climate change and ocean acidification;
- Dr. Michael “Marty” Marinak, Ph.D, a Berkeley-educated computational physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory;
- Dr. Gene Nelson, Ph.D., a nationally recognized expert on energy, and a professor in the fields of engineering, physical sciences, and biological sciences;
- Dr. Abraham Weitzberg, Ph.D., an MIT-educated engineer with over fifty-five years of experience in the field.

The scientists say the conclusion is based upon simple realities. "Solar and wind energy are clean, but unable to provide energy 24/7, " explains Dr. Expert1. "Even when available, renewable sources fluctuate, creating voltage instability and other problems. Because balancing their variable output requires burning natural gas or coal, California ends up increasing the very emissions we're trying to cut."

There are other risks, the group asserts. California currently relies on burning fossil fuel methane, or "natural gas", for 58% of its electricity generation. Increased dependence on natural gas after the 2013 shutdown of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station is thought to be a factor in a catastrophic leak at Sempra's Aliso Canyon storage facility. The Fall, 2015 leak emitted as much GHG pollution in about one month as all the cars in California do in an entire year, yet is dwarfed by allowed, 'normal' statewide methane leakage regulators allow.

“It will be impossible for the state to meet our vaunted clean-energy goals without having Diablo Canyon as part of the mix,” said Dr. Expert2. “Californians are not getting the whole story. We call on the CPUC and California leaders to buck the national 'anti-science' trend and be guided by evidence. All the evidence supports our conclusion closing the plant will result in dirty air, power instability and higher electricity rates. That’s not good for anyone.”

It is expected that the CPUC will issue its final ruling in June. The group's full testimony of the scientists can be accessed here: [CGNP 20170127 400941.pdf](#)