

August 29, 2022

Members of the California State Legislature,

On behalf of the American Nuclear Society's (ANS) 10,000 professional members, many of whom live in California, we urge quick passage of Senate Bill 846, as part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's climate action plan to keep California's lights on by extending the operations of Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

Diablo Canyon is a well-performing nuclear power plant that has operated safely for nearly 40 years under the strict oversight of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the California-appointed Diablo Canyon Independent Safety Committee. The premature shutdown of Diablo Canyon units 1 and 2, slated respectively in November 2024 and August 2025, would inflict grave harm to California's economy, environment, and power grid.

Diablo Canyon's 2,240 megawatts of baseload power constitutes approximately 17 percent of California's greenhouse-gas-free electricity supply and nearly 9 percent of California's total electricity supply. Diablo Canyon remains an important source of safe, reliable, and dispatchable zero-emissions electricity.

California will need Diablo Canyon and every other clean energy resource it has to meet its electric reliability, environmental, and climate goals. The state cannot afford to limit its decarbonization strategy to solar, wind, geothermal and battery technologies. Intermittent sources alone cannot do the job. A clean, affordable, and reliable grid requires a strong backbone of always-on and available baseload generation like Diablo Canyon.

Continued drought has sustained dramatic drops in the productivity of hydroelectric power in the state, down 48 percent below normal, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. If the planned closure goes ahead, most of Diablo Canyon's carbon-free electricity would be replaced by carbon-emitting natural gas- and coal-fired generation from out of state.

S.B. 846 provides a pathway for relicensing Diablo Canyon, expedites state regulatory review of extending plant operations, and enables plant owner Pacific Gas & Electric Co. (PG&E) to recover costs associated with relicensing Diablo Canyon. Passage of the legislation before August 31, 2022, is necessary in order for PG&E to meet the U.S. Department of Energy's deadline of September 6 for applying for federal loans that could go towards some or all of costs associated with relicensing.

S.B. 846 would also make available a \$1.4 billion state loan to PG&E to cover costs associated with relicensing Diablo Canyon. The costs associated with preserving California's largest clean energy resource is a small investment compared to the overall cost of California's challenging energy transition.

Passage of legislation to keep Diablo Canyon online would:


- safeguard California's largest carbon-free energy resource,
- prevent worse blackouts on California's already fragile power grid,
- mitigate the state's growing dependency on out-of-state fossil fuels,
- avoid millions of tons of additional greenhouse gas emissions per year,
- and bolster the state's climate efforts.

Critics claim that continued operation of Diablo Canyon is not safe. The NRC, our country's independent agency overseeing nuclear safety, must make that safety assessment – not avowed foes of nuclear energy. The NRC has the technical resources and expertise to evaluate a Diablo Canyon license renewal application, and its legal duty is to assure protection of public health and safety. A speedy license renewal application by PG&E will enable the NRC to render an informed and impartial safety assessment, which needs to be the goal of all parties.

On behalf of California's nuclear engineers, scientists and technologists, we encourage you to support S.B. 846 and we urge quick passage to save Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

Sincerely,

Dr. Steven A. Arndt

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven A. Arndt".

President
American Nuclear Society

Craig H. Piercy

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig H. Piercy".

Executive Director/CEO
American Nuclear Society