

NRDC Joins PG&E, Labor & Other Enviro Groups in Historic Proposal to Replace California Nuclear Plant with Efficiency, Renewables

World's 1st Such Commitment to Zero-Emissions Energy

June 21, 2016
California

MEDIA CONTACTS

Pat Remick, (202) 289-2411, premick@nrdc.org, or Liz Heyd, (202) 289-2424, eheyd@nrdc.org

SAN FRANCISCO—The Natural Resources Defense Council today signed a historic proposal with Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E), labor unions, and other environmental groups to replace Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant with zero-emissions energy--including energy efficiency, wind, and solar power--within nine years, marking the first time any nuclear facility retirement has included such a commitment.

“Energy efficiency and clean renewable energy from the wind and sun can replace aging nuclear plants -- and this proves it. The key is taking the time to plan. Nuclear power versus fossil fuels is a false choice based on yesterday's options,” said NRDC President Rhea Suh. “The Diablo Canyon solution is the way of the future. Even as nuclear plants near retirement, we can cut our carbon footprint with energy efficiency and renewable power. Our families, our businesses and our children will be the better for it.”

Although there have been other recently announced plans to shutter nuclear plants, this is the first with a replacement commitment of no carbon emissions.

The generation from California's last remaining nuclear power plant, which began operating in 1985, will be replaced with efficiency programs that reduce electricity needs; wind and solar power; demand response (compensating customers for reducing their electricity use during peak periods); and increased amounts of capacity to store wind and solar energy for later use.

NRDC, which will join the other signatories in supporting the [Joint Proposal](#) before state and federal regulators, estimates PG&E customers will save at least \$1 billion from its implementation.

Also signing the proposal were Friends of the Earth, Environment California, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1245, the Coalition of California Utility Employees, and the Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility.

Under the Joint Proposal, PG&E will withdraw its request for a 20-year extension of its Nuclear Regulatory Commission licenses for Diablo Canyon's two generating units near San Luis Obispo. The current licenses for Diablo's two units about 250 miles south of San Francisco expire in November 2, 2024, and August 26, 2025, respectively.

NRDC was invited originally by Friends of the Earth and PG&E to participate in negotiating a proposal for the orderly closure of Diablo Canyon because of NRDC's years of participation in California electricity proceedings and expertise on energy efficiency, renewable energy resources, and the safe decommissioning of nuclear plants. Energy Program Co-Director Ralph Cavanagh was NRDC's lead negotiator, supported by members of NRDC's Energy and Transportation, Nuclear, and Oceans teams.

“Giant baseload nuclear power plants like Diablo Canyon cannot easily be taken offline or ramped up and down as system needs change, which obstructs the integration of renewable resources with variable output into the electricity grid. This worsening problem is forcing the California grid operator to shut down low-cost renewable generation that could otherwise be used productively,” Cavanagh said.

The Joint Proposal includes an increase in PG&E’s target for renewables to 55 percent, effective in 2030, as compared to the state’s statutory goal of 50 percent renewables by that date.

Diablo Canyon accounts for about 9 percent of California’s in-state power generation, 6 percent of the state’s total electricity mix, and about 20 percent of the electricity in the service territory of PG&E – one of the nation’s largest combination natural gas and electric utilities, serving 16 million people in northern and central California.

The announcement precedes a decision by the California State Lands Commission on whether to extend the permit allowing the plant continued access to ocean cooling water. The parties to the Joint Proposal will support the extension at next Tuesday’s (June 28) meeting, which would allow the plant continued access to ocean cooling water from the current permit’s 2018 expiration date through the end of the two-unit plant’s current operating licenses in 2024 and 2025, respectively. Ocean water intakes would drop significantly once the plant begins its decommissioning process.

For more information, see the blogs to be posted today by NRDC President Rhea Suh[here](#) and Ralph Cavanagh's blog on the story behind the agreement [here](#). Additional expert blogs will be posted in the coming days. The proposal can be found [here](#). A slide-deck explaining the proposal is [here](#).

The other signatories to the proposal will be publishing separate news releases.

Other media contacts are:

- PG&E 24-Hour Media Line: (415) 973-5930
- IBEW 1245 / Coalition of California Utility Employees: Tom Dalzell, (925) 788-6189
- Friends of the Earth: Damon Moglen, office: 202-222-0708, cell: 202-352-4223
- Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility: David Weisman (805) 704-1810

###

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 2 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Livingston, Montana, and Beijing. Visit us at <http://www.nrdc.org> and follow us on Twitter @NRDC