

## DOCKETED

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January 29, 2016

The Honorable Governor Jerry Brown  
The Honorable Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, Chairperson, California Lands  
Commission  
Mr. Michael Picker, President, California Public Utilities Commission  
Mr. Robert Weisenmiller, Chairperson, California Energy Commission  
Ms. Mary Nichols, Chairperson, California Air Resources Board  
Ms. Effie Turnbull-Sanders, Chairperson, California Coastal Commission  
Mr. Anthony Early, CEO Pacific Gas & Electric

Dear Governor Brown, Lt. Gov. Newsom, Chairperson Picker, Chairperson  
Weisenmiller, Chairperson Turnbull-Sanders, Chairperson Nichols, and Mr. Early,

We are writing as scientists, conservationists, and philanthropists to urge you to  
do everything in your powers to ensure that California's last nuclear power plant,  
Diablo Canyon Power Plant, is relicensed.

In particular, we urge you to work together to expedite state regulatory  
approvals and eliminate redundant regulatory processes so that PG&E can  
request a renewal of Diablo Canyon's operating license from the federal Nuclear  
Regulatory Commission. We urge you not to allow unrelated conflicts, politics,  
ideology or irrational fears to get in the way.

Diablo Canyon provided 22 percent of all the clean energy electricity generated  
in California in 2014. If closed, it will likely be replaced by natural gas and  
California's carbon emissions will increase the equivalent of adding nearly two  
million cars to the road.

Closing Diablo Canyon would make it far harder to meet the state's climate  
goals. Already, the percentage of electricity California generates from clean  
energy declined from 53 percent in 2011 to 38 percent in 2014. Without Diablo,  
California's clean electricity generation would decline to 26 percent while  
electricity from natural gas would rise to 70 percent.

Declining electricity from clean energy sources, including hydro-electric dams,  
underscores the importance of nuclear, the only source of zero carbon power  
that is reliable no matter the weather or climate. In 2014, Diablo Canyon — a  
single power plant — produced 24 percent more electricity than all of  
California's wind, and 33 percent more electricity than all of California's solar.

Diablo Canyon produces twice as much power as all of California's solar panels, and 40 times more than its largest solar farm.

Diablo Canyon has been repeatedly inspected, upgraded, certified, and re-certified as safe by the independent federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for three decades. Independent nuclear safety experts view Diablo Canyon as one of the best-run nuclear power plants in the world, and believe it is highly likely NRC would renew Diablo Canyon's license to operate from 2025 to 2045.

While it is within the purview of the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to assess the safety of Diablo Canyon, the CPUC has neither the technical expertise nor the political independence of the NRC. We encourage CPUC to limit its oversight to the minimum that fulfills its legitimate obligations in this area.

There is no reason why Diablo Canyon should require another environmental impact report (EIR), as Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, who acts as chairman of the State Lands Commission, says he will request. California EIRs are warranted when new developments are under consideration or when an existing development wishes to make significant operational or design changes. Neither of those conditions has been met.

To protect the integrity of the EIR process, and not allow EIRs to be used in a selective or arbitrary way, we encourage the Lands Commission to reject the request for an EIR.

State environmental regulations of Diablo Canyon's once-through-cooling should pose no obstacle to re-licensing as there are various low-cost mitigation options available to PG&E. Staff and consultants for the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and PG&E have already identified options, such as the creation of an artificial reef and land conservation, as ways PG&E can mitigate its impact at a cost that would allow the plant to remain profitable.

Keeping Diablo Canyon open will result in greater protection for California's spectacular natural environment, while closing it would reduce it. Today, the rocky intertidal area around Diablo Canyon is one of the most pristine in San Luis Obispo County owing to its protection from public use. The coastal exclusion

zone around Diablo Canyon has thus served to protect 12 miles of valuable marine habitat and wildlife.

If Diablo goes away, so too will the possibility of land conservation purchased by PG&E for mitigation. And because Diablo Canyon's land footprint is so small, it will very likely be replaced by electricity from power plants, whether fossil or renewable, whose footprint is much larger.

For its part, we encourage PG&E to publicly commit to seek the re-licensing of Diablo Canyon, and to agree to reasonable regulations, regulatory questioning and process, and to commit to invest in reasonable mitigation measures.

Diablo Canyon helps PG&E meet its commitment to providing clean, inexpensive and reliable electricity to Californians, as well as its fiduciary duty to its shareholders. Diablo Canyon is a reliable and profitable source of clean energy. While natural gas prices are at historic lows, they are unlikely to stay low. And moving from nuclear to natural gas would undermine PG&E's commitment to clean energy.

We thank you all for your commitment to clean energy, conservation, and climate action, and hope you will see how protecting Diablo Canyon is in the best interests of California's environment, economy and people, as well as our shared global climate

We hope you will do all in your power to work with each other to expedite the regulatory and renewal process.

Sincerely,

**Climate and Conservation Scientists**

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### **Conservationists and Philanthropists**

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