

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	15-IEPR-12
Project Title:	Nuclear Power Plants
TN #:	204564
Document Title:	William P. Gloege Comments: Need for Diablo Canyon and Role of Nuclear Power in California
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	William P. Gloege
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	5/10/2015 5:50:08 PM
Docketed Date:	5/11/2015

Comment Received From: William P Gloege

Submitted On: 5/10/2015

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Need for Diablo Canyon and Role of Nuclear Power in California

With loss of the powerful non-emitting nuclear powered electrical plant at San Onofre, California is teetering on the edge of failure to meet its ambitious carbon emission targets. Nuclear power with only 60 plants out of 6,000 power plants of all types in the USA, produces 63.3% of Americas emission free power. Nuclear reactors are the safest of all power generating means according to a 2012 study published in Forbes Magazine, "How Deadly is Your Kilowatt?" This counts all injuries and fatalities of accidents at Chernobyl and Fukushima.

Advanced countries like China are pulling ahead of the US, the initial leader in nuclear reactor technology, with over 50 new nuclear plants planned for construction, and new molten salt reactors nearing development for market. These types of new technology reactors are extremely safe, producing tiny waste and waste half life in 200 years.

California, a leader in many fields such as medicine, digital technology, entertainment, software development, higher education and other fields should be in the forefront of emission free technology like nuclear power which has the capability to fully and completely meet US energy needs and replace dirty, death dealing, planet-killing fossil fuel.

The California Energy Commission has a central role in either causing that leadership to take shape, or preventing it from ever happening. Our State should lead for another reason - we are the first modern place in the terrible grips of a climate change driven drought that is starting to take down our \$2 trillion economy supporting 39 million Californians.

Will the CEC take the challenge to fight carbon emissions, or retreat behind a curtain of political timidity? That decision will define our role as a State and a people in the unfolding fight of mankind to insure life on earth continues. (See climate experts James Hansen and James Lovelock of the UK for where global warming is taking our planet).

Diablo Canyon is the last nuclear plant in California. This magnificently run facility produces 2,300 Megawatts of clean, emission free power serving the equivalent of 3 million homes. The plant runs at an average of 94% of its rated capacity. Diablo Canyon's 24/7 flawless operation for nearly 30 years should convince any power expert that this should be the No. 1 power choice of our State. (solar power performs at below 20% much ballyhooped capacity, while wind comes in a little higher).

Nuclear waste long term storage is cited as a shortcoming of this power source. Yet, if we are rational, we must compare this waste danger with the actual record of injury and death from it and its only competitor - fossil fuel. Only those two sources have the ability to scale up to meet America's enormous demands.

The scorecard shows nuclear stored waste has a count of zero in human injuries or fatalities in over 65 years of operation in America. Meanwhile, the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society and the World Health Organization state fossil fuel waste kills millions annually and renders ill many more each year.

Where is waste from these two power sources stored? Nuclear waste is stored on site of reactors in secure thick steel canisters embedded in another massive concrete container, then placed in the ground.

Fossil fuel waste, on the other hand, is not "stored" at all - it is released immediately into our surface air and breathed in by children and adults causing the deaths and illnesses cited above. The CO2 emitted by burning fossil fuels, goes on to inflict further damage on mankind. Released into the atmosphere, it contributes to warming the planet to a point

where eventually earth won't support life.

The CEC is urged to be part of a vision of a new energy era whereby carbon emissions stop endangering life on earth, and deadly smoke, soot and ozone are steadily reduced to zero. The Commission can be part of the vision of having cheap nuclear power working to desalinate sea water for a Golden State in the beginning stages of dying of thirst due to climate change. Be a bold part of leadership to a better future for our great State.