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Keep Diablo Canyon Running!

To: California Energy Commission

I urge your support for the continued operation of Diablo Canyon for several reasons. Closing nuclear power plants while the earth is in danger of overheating makes no sense. Every type of electricity generation involves risks/benefits. Risks posed by nuclear, which many vastly exaggerate, are miniscule compared to the potential consequences of not addressing climate change: melting permafrost releasing huge amounts of methane, sea level rise, food insecurity, climate refugees, ocean acidification, to mention a few. Many of risks of renewables are not fully appreciated. Nuclear is also needed for reliable, dependable energy because of the intermittency of renewables and avoiding the increased complexity of managing grids if renewables become too great a share of capacity. Storage solutions with adequate capacity are years away.

Concerns regarding safety and spent fuel disposal unfortunately have led some to argue for plant closures. The US track record shows nuclear is safe. I have lived over half of my 62 years within 10 miles of Millstone in Waterford, CT and have not lost a minute of sleep over that. Solutions for spent fuel are trivial compared to dealing with climate change.

The situation you are facing is very similar to the decision we had to make here a few years ago in CT. It might be helpful to review what happened. As you may know, Millstone was at risk of closure for profitability reasons resulting from low natural gas prices, along with subsidies for renewables. Like many other states, CT is striving to lower emissions and rightly so has aggressive targets. Fortunately, it was realized that meeting those targets and providing reliable energy would be impossible without Millstone. A PPA helped keep Millstone running, providing electricity at just under 5 cents/KWh through 2029. I'm proud of CT keeping Millstone running and doing our part to minimize CO2 emissions.

On the other hand, there are examples where closure of nuclear plants with ample years of life has made matters worse. Germany is the poster child for this. Closing nuclear plants has increased CO2 emissions from natural gas and coal, not to mention underwriting a totalitarian regime and the war in Ukraine. Electricity has become more expensive and less reliable. Germany will not meet its emissions targets. We are seeing a similar situation play out in NY and CA.

Maintaining Diablo Canyon will provide solid economic benefits to CA, including well paid jobs and reliable energy for businesses and industry.

I appreciate residents of your great state should have the loudest voice in determining what best suits their needs. However, what CA does affects us all. In the spirit of sharing responsibility for stewardship of our earth we need all communities around the world working together, and I am hopeful that CA will maintain Diablo Canyon for the benefit of both CA and the rest of us.

Thank you for considering my views, Fred Behringer
Member, The Climate Coalition