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## **Diablo Canyon is safe, reliable and can help fight climate change**

Please see the attached August 10, 2022 San Jose Mercury News OpEd by Professors Steven Chu of Stanford and Jacopo Buongiorno of MIT. California energy policy should be informed by science. Instead, those policies appear to be influenced most by commercial interests that would benefit from needlessly shutting down California's largest generator in 2025. Diablo Canyon annually cost-effectively produces the equivalent of five (5) Hoover Dams of carbon free energy. Please see CGNP's website at CGNP dot org for additional details.

Gene Nelson, Ph.D. CGNP Legal Assistant

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

# **The Mercury News Opinion: Diablo Canyon is safe, reliable and can help fight climate change**

California cannot abandon the carbon-free energy production of nuclear power if it hopes to meet state goals



Keeping Diablo Canyon open offers by far the most economically viable and scientifically sound path forward for a carbon-free California. (Michael A. Mariant, AP File Photo)

By **STEVEN CHU** and **JACOPO BUONGIORNO** |

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<https://www.mercurynews.com/2022/08/10/opinion-diablo-canyon-is-a-safe-reliable-and-useful-to-fight-climate-change/>

California is waking up to the reality that we need all solutions on the table to fight climate change — and those include keeping the state’s last nuclear power plant online.

California has set admirable, aggressive goals for ending its dependence on fossil fuels, bringing on clean energy resources and creating a zero-carbon economy. But the grim reality is that the state is not on track to meet those goals. Supply chain constraints, COVID-19 and Murphy’s Law have conspired to put California well behind schedule.

A growing number of scientific experts, political leaders and community advocates now agree that to get back on track, we must not only continue to expedite all efforts to bring renewables such as solar and wind power online, but **we cannot abandon the carbon-free energy production of nuclear power. This applies nationwide, and in California it means extending operation of the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.**

**The climate emergency demands it, and it is a cost-effective approach.**

Keeping Diablo Canyon open offers by far the most economically viable and scientifically sound path forward for a carbon-free California. **Our much-cited MIT-Stanford report**

**found that Diablo Canyon would save ratepayers billions of dollars as an electricity generator for the grid.**

At the same time, more than 35 years of operation clearly established that Diablo Canyon is a safe and reliable resource for clean energy as it provides 2,200 megawatts of 24/7 emission-free electricity, accounting for 15% of California's clean energy supply.

**It's time to put alarmist and unfounded safety issues behind us.**

Following the Fukushima accident in 2011, the NRC and the California Diablo Canyon's Independent Safety Committee conducted a nine-year review of the plant and found that the facility was built to withstand a 1-in-100,000-year seismic event on its existing site, with only benign degradation of systems and components for even stronger earthquakes. Raising seismic questions in 2022 related to Diablo Canyon is ill-informed or disingenuous. If there was a large earthquake in the area, the Diablo Canyon buildings would be the safest place to shelter in.

Furthermore, the actual damage at Fukushima was caused by a tsunami hitting the near-sea-level plant. **Diablo rests above an 85-foot bluff — eight-stories tall. Even with sea level rise, it is not vulnerable to such a surge.**

**The extremely low risk of continuing to operate Diablo must be compared against the very real risks of rolling blackouts and an electrical grid that can't handle the intensifying, increasingly frequent devastating heatwaves that come with climate change.**

**The California Energy Commission currently anticipates a full 1,000 megawatts of potential gap in energy production in August and up to a 3,500 megawatt deficiency in September, according to its latest Summer Stack Analysis.** And at current realistic scale-up rates of other zero-carbon energy sources, the state could continue to be short through much of the decade even if we burnt a lot more gas. California is in no position to remove its largest contributor of reliable clean energy from the grid at such a time.

Diablo Canyon has been thoroughly studied, analyzed and debated. It plays a critical role in California achieving a zero-carbon future. It makes financial and economic sense and **could even create new revenue opportunities with the addition of desalination and clean hydrogen power facilities. As passionate advocates for clean energy and the environment, we believe it is time to move forward with a plan to continue operation of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.**

*Steven Chu is a former U.S. Secretary of Energy, Nobel laureate in physics and professor of physics and molecular and cellular physiology at Stanford University. Jacopo Buongiorno is the TEPCO professor of nuclear science and engineering and director of the Center for Advanced Nuclear Energy Systems at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*