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*Comment Received From: Roger Johnson, PhD*  
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**on Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

**From:** [RJohnson](#)  
**To:** [Energy - Docket Optical System](#)  
**Subject:** Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant  
**Date:** Friday, August 19, 2022 3:29:20 PM

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To the California Energy Commission:

An important milestone in California history occurred back in 1976 when the legislature passed a very popular moratorium blocking any more nuclear power facilities in the state until there is a solution to the serious problem of the deadly nuclear waste they create. Now, a half-century later there is still no solution in sight. As a result, California was saved from the nightmarish proposals to build nuclear power plants up and down its coast.

Unfortunately, both Diablo Canyon and San Onofre were already under construction and could not be included. But San Onofre is already being demolished and thankfully the same fate soon awaits Diablo Canyon. But now the governor has created a new crisis: he wants us to ignore the lessons of history and bring nuclear power back to California.

This would be a monumental mistake. Any attempt to disguise this as a need for more electricity is pure deception as Michael Hiltzik of the *LATimes* explains (see the reference below). Nuclear power is sometimes erroneously portrayed as “clean energy” when in fact it is extremely dirty and environmentally destructive.

On the front end of the nuclear cycle, many have died and towns have been bulldozed because of the radioactive contamination in the mining and milling of uranium (see below). Reactor operation is also an environmentally dirty process since all nuclear power plants regularly emit radioactivity into air and discharge effluent radioactive waste (in our case) into the Pacific Ocean. Whether these discharges cause cancer, the number one killer in California, is unknown, partly because the nuclear industry has thwarted research proposed by the National Academy of Sciences designed to find out.

The back end of the nuclear cycle (vast amounts of nuclear waste) is also a very serious concern. Every year, over 20 metric tons of deadly nuclear waste is generated at Diablo Canyon, a plant that is already bursting with thousands of tons of spent nuclear fuel. Why do we want to create even more of this extremely dangerous nuclear waste when there is no solution for the waste we already have?

It is no secret that an accident, an earthquake or tsunami, an airplane crash, or a terrorist incident could render large sections of California uninhabitable. Returning to nuclear power is a serious step backward and a rejection of what California has stood for since 1976. It would be a setback not only for the important quest for clean energy but it would also subject all of us to the possibility of a trillion dollar catastrophe.

The proposal to bring back nuclear power to California should be soundly rejected.

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August 19, 2022

### Further Reading

1. What would happen if California cities and towns suffered from radioactive contamination? What about towns elsewhere which became contaminated from the mining of uranium? Do we want to mine more uranium to keep nuclear reactors operating? Read about the Colorado uranium mining town that became so contaminated that residents starting dying from cancer and eventually the entire town had to be bulldozed. Read "*The Uranium Widows: Why would a community want to return to milling a radioactive element?*" <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/09/13/the-uranium-widows>

2. Read the truth about the seismic risks at Diablo Canyon published in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* a few days ago. It estimates that the risk of a catastrophic core meltdown at Diablo Canyon is 1 in 800: <https://thebulletin.org/2022/08/the-diablo-canyon-nuclear-plant-assessing-the-seismic-risks-of-extended-operation/#post-heading>

3. In the last week, the *Los Angeles Times* ran an editorial and two Op Ed columns opposing the reopening of Diablo Canyon. Here is one of them entitled "We don't need Diablo Canyon's nuclear power to prevent summer blackouts" (print edition title: "Plan to keep nuclear plant open is lunacy"): <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2022-08-18/diablo-canyon-nuclear-plant-extension-2025-newsom-mistake>

4. Also a few days ago, *Ars Technica* published a technical report about the serious problems associated with managing and disposing of spent nuclear fuel: <https://arstechnica.com/science/2022/08/solving-the-rock-hard-problem-of-nuclear-waste-disposal/>