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Speak to Gregory Jaczko

All those who are in a position to decide whether to extend operations at Diablo Canyon need to speak to former NRC Chairman Gregory Jaczko. At the very least, they should read his book "Confessions of a Rogue Nuclear Regulator."

Like me, and like the former Prime Minister of Japan, Naoto Kan, the Fukushima disaster changed Jaczko's views about the risks of nuclear power and made him realize that renewable energy is the best solution to climate change and is the safer, more efficient and more affordable option. "Nuclear generation is inherently dangerous," he says, and adds that regulatory capture makes it even more so.

Before Fukushima, I scoffed at the idea of a Chernobyl type accident happening in Japan. We weren't the inefficient Soviet Union, after all. We'd been operating nuclear plants for decades without incident. We're the nation with high speed trains that run on time "to nearly the second. Our engineers and work staff are conscientious and dedicated to a fault.

BUT NONE OF THAT MATTERED!

Things happen. And the odds of something happening increase with frequency. The more times you go skydiving, the greater the odds are that on your next dive, something will happen. The more times you eat oysters, the greater the likelihood that the next one will give you food poisoning. The longer a nuclear power plant stays in operation, the greater the risks of a major accident.

But with the nuclear power plant, the risks are catastrophic. Nuclear generation is the most dangerous, expensive, complicated way to boil water. And to make matters worse, the plant is already decades old, with reactor embrittlement issues, mechanical problems with the stator and auxiliary water feeding systems. Veteran workers have moved on, there is deferred maintenance. And the plant is already sited over intersecting fault lines. The odds are really stacked up against us.

Saying that "nothing's happened" in the past is a meaningless argument for extending operations. The past is irrelevant. What might happen in the future is now. Saying that Diablo Canyon is sited so that a tsunami could never wipe out its backup power is also meaningless. It is completely possible that an enormous earthquake could make the entire cliff that Diablo is on slide right into the ocean. Furthermore, there have been MANY blackouts, all of them with Diablo Canyon running 24/7.

Why would Governor Newsom want to make this kind of gamble with his political career? If something were to happen at Diablo, his political future would be dead—but

WE are the one who will directly affected. He is putting all of us and our businesses at great risk. There is no need to do so. California can direct its energies, its political will and its resources into expanding renewables, storage and efficiency. We are already on the right track and do not need this enormous risk. Don't take us back to 1960's technology to deal with the today's challenges. Do not betray this community. Do not betray California's unique position as a leader in innovation and forward-thinking.

Lastly, the Governor, the CEC and the State Legislature must consider the ethical breach they'd commit if they break the agreement to shut down Diablo Canyon according to schedule.