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California Energy Commission  
1516 9th Street, MS4  
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Comments of the Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club on AB 1632 Nuclear Power Plant Assessment Draft Study Plan Docket No. 07-AB-1632



These comments address the Draft Study Plan and the 2007 Status Report.

Under Task 4: Impact of a Major Disruption, "Production Cost Modeling Approach," PG&E's suggested removal of this sentence:

"In addition, the contractor will be cognizant of issues raised by the Ocean Protection Council in their assessment of the possible retirement of plants that use once-through cooling."

is unconscionable. The California Coastal Commission notes that Diablo's cooling system impacts decimate up to 160 acres of kelp habitat, cause "continuous major reductions in species and populations within the Cove...an almost complete loss of some fish and algae species" and "a substantial decline in black abalone." The estimated number of organisms killed by the cooling system is equivalent to that which would be produced in 210-500 acres of reef. "This impact represents a substantial loss to the local and regional offshore environment."

In determining "whether artificial reefs would provide meaningful mitigation... PG&E has objected to this approach, in large part based on its contention that the economic costs of DCP's entrainment are only about \$26,000 per year and that the cost of the reefs would be 'wholly disproportionate' to the costs of the impacts. This calculation is based largely on including only those costs associated with the potential value of adult fish that could have been caught had they not been entrained as eggs or larvae. This economic approach does not take into consideration the ecosystem and food web value of those eggs and larvae." (- CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION CONSOLIDATED STAFF REPORT, 11/30/06, DE NOVO HEARING FOR APPEAL AND COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION, COMMISSION APPEAL NO. A-3-SLO-06-017)

In addition, we note the following, from "Nuclear Power in California: Status Report 2007, Final Consultant Report," Chapter 9:

"[under the terms of the SWRCB proposed policy], nuclear power plants would have been allowed to use restoration measures to fully achieve their impingement and entrainment standards if implementing operational and/or technological measures would conflict with NRC safety requirements. This proposed policy would not have allowed for a site-specific determination of BTA based on cost considerations; all feasible mitigation measures to attain the reduction targets would have been required. Because of the 2007 court

decision on EPA's regulations for existing power plants, the SWRCB staff is now expected in 2007 to issue a revised proposal consistent with the court's decision."

"Measures to reduce the environmental impacts of once-through cooling are already in place at SONGS and are currently being developed for Diablo Canyon.... the CCRWQCB decided that marine reserves were the better option."

These statements are in conflict with each other, and the phrase "currently being developed" is misleading. Marine reserves would not "fully achieve" Impingement & Entrainment standards. Closed-cycle/dry cooling does not constitute "operational and/or technological measures [that] would conflict with NRC safety requirements." Both statements are false. The CCRWQCB decided to await the court decision on EPA regulations before finalizing the consent decree (for marine reserves and conservation easement), and has not yet done so.

Also per "Nuclear Power in California: Status Report 2007, Final Consultant Report," Chapter 9, Conclusion:

"Given the limited knowledge of future energy costs and benefits, the best path now may be to pursue all options."

This conclusion leans heavily on the opinions of GBN, EPRI, and J.H. Holdren. Scant attention and insufficient review is accorded to researchers who state, and data that indicates, that we need not – and cannot afford to – "pursue all options." We concur with Amory Lovins' assessment of this opinion: "A popular euphemism holds that we must 'keep nuclear energy on the table.' What exactly does this mean? Continued massive R&D investments for a 'mature' technology that has taken the lion's share of energy R&D for decades (39% in OECD during 1991–2001, and 59% in the United States during 1948–98)? Ever bigger taxpayer subsidies to divert investment away from the successful competitors? Heroic life-support measures? Where will such efforts stop? We've been trying to make nuclear power cost-effective for a half-century. Are we there yet? When will we be? How will we know? And would nuclear advocates simply agree to de-subsidize the entire energy sector, so all options can compete on a level playing field?" (– "Nuclear power: economics and climate-protection potential," Amory B. Lovins, RMI, 9/11/05).

Lovins notes: "The more concerned you are about climate change, the more vital it is to invest judiciously, not indiscriminately—best buys first, not the more the merrier. A state government committed to market-based, least-cost energy policies could do much to correct the distortions introduced by misguided federal policies. State energy taxes might even be designed to offset federal energy subsidies, technology-by-technology, to create a 'subsidy-free zone.' This should have a salutary effect on energy cost, security, environmental impacts, and broad economic benefits. Just talking seriously about it and analyzing its consequences could help to focus attention on the differences between current federal energy policy and sound free-market principles. Such a state could become the first jurisdiction in the world to allow all ways to save or produce energy to compete fairly and at honest prices, regardless of which kind they are, what technology they use, how big they are, or who owns them." (ibid.)

The Commission's Scope of Nuclear Power Policy and Planning Issues Assessment should include such an analysis and assess the possibility of the

state of California adopting such a policy.

The Commission's List of Studies to be Reviewed for Nuclear Power Policy and Planning Issues Assessment should include:

- the ASES report "Tackling Climate Change," showing CO2 reduction targets being met and nuclear power eliminated.
- the 2007 report from the European Renewable Energy Council and Greenpeace International detailing how to reduce CO2 emissions by 50% by 2050 and use renewable energy for 70% of electrical demand ([www.energyblueprint.info](http://www.energyblueprint.info))
- the October 2006 "Sustainable Energy Blueprint," envisioning a domestic energy mix in which energy efficiency improvements have reduced energy use from present levels by 40%, renewables account for at least half of total energy supplies, greenhouse gas emissions have been cut by two-thirds from 2005 levels, fossil fuel imports have ceased, and nuclear power is no longer in use. [www.nirs.org/alternatives/sustainableenergyblueprint.pdf](http://www.nirs.org/alternatives/sustainableenergyblueprint.pdf)

Thank you for your time,

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