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See attached file(s)

Attachments

NL-19-1221 SNC Response to NRC Solicitation for Comments on Potential Improvements to the Reactor Oversight Process

The San Diego Union-Tribune

Pro-nuclear green group: Bring back San Onofre



Unit 2, right, and Unit 3 reactor containment structures at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

(Hayne Palmour IV / San Diego Union-Tribune)

By [ROB NIKOLEWSKI](#)

JULY 21, 2016 4:09 PM

<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-sanonofre-return-group-2016jul21-story.html>

It may be a long shot, but a pro-nuclear environmental organization based near San Luis Obispo wants to bring the [San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station](#) back to life.

“I think it can happen if we’re allowed to make our case,” said [Gene Nelson, government liaison for Californians for Green Nuclear Power](#), which contends that nuclear power is essential for the state to meet its clean energy targets in the coming years.

But can San Onofre, which has not produced electricity since January 2012 and is well into the third year of a 20-year decommissioning process, realistically get back up and running?

Rob Nikolewski tours the decommissioning of San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.

“I’ve heard from far too many people (who say), ‘Once we’ve flipped the switch, it’s irreversible,’” Nelson said. “I don’t think that’s true.”

CGNP’s members see the [recent decision by the California Public Utilities Commission](#) to reopen the controversial \$4.7 billion San Onofre settlement as a potential opening.

The original settlement reached in March 2014 called on utility ratepayers to shoulder [about 70 percent](#) of the costs of shutting down the nuclear plant.

Southern California Edison is the majority owner of the plant and oversees its operations. San Diego Gas & Electric, a subsidiary of Sempra Energy, owns 20 percent.

After recent disclosures published in The San Diego Union-Tribune of a secret meeting in Warsaw, Poland, between an Edison executive and then-CPUC President Michael Peevey, a CPUC administrative law judge decided to give the decommissioning deal another look.

Nelson said CGNP has filed paperwork with the CPUC in the hopes of being heard before the commission when the case is reopened.

“It’s a matter of getting the information out to people so they can actually understand what’s at stake,” Nelson said in a telephone interview.

The CGNP, which is also fighting the [decision by Pacific Gas & Electric to close the Diablo Canyon](#) nuclear plant, says the state is becoming too reliant on a fossil fuel — natural gas — for electricity and does not think renewable energy sources such as wind and solar can make up the difference as nuclear power goes offline.

“The ratepayers are already being stuck with higher bills because of the higher replacement power costs,” Nelson said.

The solution, as CGNP sees it, is to replace the failed steam generators that led to the closing of San Onofre and get the facility back online.

But [Tom Palmisano](#), the plant’s chief nuclear officer, says that would be unprecedented.

Working with the federal government’s Nuclear Regulatory Commission, San Onofre had its operating license changed in 2013 to prevent the station from putting fuel in its reactors.

In addition, Palmisano said, “I’ve not been maintaining equipment because it’s retired ... There’s no salvage value. It’s all going to be removed and disposed of as part of decommissioning.”

Palmisano said he did not know of any cases in which a decommissioned plant was revived.

“Nobody has ever closed a plant permanently and re-licensed and restarted a plant,” Palmisano said. “Nobody has ever gone backwards.”

A former president of the American Nuclear Society, who has called the shutting down of San Onofre “a tragedy for California,” said earlier this year that bringing the plant back online at this point is almost impossible.

[Don Hoffman](#), president of Maryland-based [Excel Services](#), which has expertise in recommissioning nuclear plants, said, “The only way to re-license it is under all the current standards, not the standards to which it was initially designed and built.

“And (you’d have to) license it all over again. And the time and the effort and the cost of that is just insurmountable.”

Nelson said his group has “made some crude estimates” that getting San Onofre producing electricity again would cost about \$1 billion.

That’s a hefty sum but Nelson said it’s significantly cheaper than the \$4.7 billion proposed in the original settlement approved by the CPUC.

Still, the obstacles appear to be huge — ranging from the technical challenges of reopening the plant to the question whether the CPUC grants CGNP status as a party intervenor — not to mention the intense response that would come from anti-nuclear activists at the prospect of ever bringing San Onofre back online.

“Yes, this is definitely an uphill battle,” Nelson said. “But we recognize the stakes are too big and that’s why we don’t take no for an answer readily.”

[Rob Nikolewski](#)