

Q&A: A look behind the deal to shutter California nuke plant

June 21 2016, by Alicia Chang



This Sept. 20, 2005, file photo shows the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, south of Los Osos, Calif. Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and environmental groups said Tuesday, June 21, 2016, that they've reached an agreement that will close the Diablo Canyon plant, California's last nuclear power plant, by 2025. The accord would resolve disputes about the plant that helped fuel the anti-nuclear movement nationally. (AP Photo/Michael A. Mariant, File)

California's [last nuclear power plant](#), perched on a seaside bluff midway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, is set to close by 2025 under an

agreement announced Tuesday.

The Diablo Canyon plant has been operating commercially since the mid-1980s, supplying power to about 3 million homes in Northern and central California. Here's a look at the terms of the deal:

WHO'S BEHIND IT?

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. agreed to retire Diablo Canyon when the operating licenses for its twin reactors expire in 2024 and 2025.

In 2009, the utility asked the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to consider extending operations for another two decades. Under the [deal](#) reached with labor unions and environmental groups, PG&E will no longer seek to renew its license.

The [agreement](#) has to clear several regulatory hurdles, including approval by the California Public Utilities Commission.

WHY IS DIABLO CANYON CLOSING?

California's emphasis on boosting renewable energy makes it expensive to operate Diablo Canyon in the long run. A climate change bill signed by Gov. Jerry Brown last year directed the state to use renewable sources such as solar and wind for half its electricity and to double the energy efficiency of homes, offices and existing buildings by 2030.

"As we make this transition, Diablo Canyon's full output will no longer be required," PG&E said in a statement.

WHAT WILL DIABLO CANYON PRODUCE INSTEAD?

Power produced by the twin reactors will be replaced with solar and other sources that don't spew carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. PG&E also pledged to get 55 percent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2031.

HOW MUCH WILL THE CLOSURE COST?

PG&E has estimated that decommissioning Diablo Canyon would cost about \$3.8 billion. The utility plans to submit an updated estimate.

The San Onofre nuclear plant, between San Diego and Los Angeles, shut down permanently in 2013 after excessive wear was found in steam generator tubes.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE WORKERS?

About 1,500 people work at Diablo Canyon, which is one of the largest employers in San Luis Obispo County. PG&E plans to retrain workers during the plant's decommissioning process and offer a severance package.

© 2016 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Q&A: A look behind the deal to shutter California nuke plant (2016, June 21) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-06-qa-shutter-california-nuke.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.