

Nuclear plant closures shows industry's struggles

8 June 2013, by Michael R. Blood



Lyn Harris Hicks, a longtime opponent of the San Onofre nuclear power plant and a nearby resident, wears a banner on her hat as she waits for a news conference in front of the plant Friday, June 7, 2013, in San Onofre, Calif. The troubled power plant on the California coast is closing after an epic 16-month battle over whether the twin reactors could be safely restarted with millions of people living nearby, officials announced Friday. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull)

The decision to close California's San Onofre nuclear plant is the latest setback for an industry that had seemed poised to grow.

In Wisconsin, a utility shuttered its plant last month after it couldn't find a buyer. In Florida—and now California—utilities decided it's cheaper to close plants rather than spend big money fixing them and risk the uncertainty of safety reviews.

Meanwhile, the low cost of natural gas is discouraging utilities from spending billions to build nuclear reactors. Three [plants](#) under construction in the Southeast face delays and cost overruns.

It's a big change from a few years ago, when a more robust economy, higher energy prices and a

focus on greenhouse gasses brought on what the industry called a "nuclear renaissance."



A surfer rides a wave in front of the San Onofre nuclear power plant Friday, June 7, 2013, in San Onofre, Calif. The troubled power plant on the California coast is closing after an epic 16-month battle over whether the twin reactors could be safely restarted with millions of people living nearby, officials announced Friday. (AP Photo/Gregory Bull)

Nuclear supporters acknowledge the problems. Still, they say [nuclear plants](#) prevent the country from putting too much reliance on natural gas.

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