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Closure of San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant is Great News for California

SACRAMENTO—Today Southern California Edison announced that it would not reopen the San Onofre nuclear power plant in Northern San Diego County. The plant has been closed for 17 months, following discovery that its steam generating system was failing. The plant was first opened beside one of the state’s most beautiful beaches more than 40 years ago.

San Diego Gas & Electric owns a 20 percent share in the plant.

Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips released the following statement in response to the announcement of the plant’s closure:

“Southern California Edison’s decision to close this cranky, unpredictable and potentially very dangerous power plant is smart for its bottom line, smart for ratepayers, and smart for the environment.

“For more than 40 years, many Californians who live in the broadly cast shadow of this plant have had to worry that something might go wrong—just as something went terribly wrong at the plant in Fukushima, Japan more than two years ago. Finally closing this plant is the beginning of the end of the uncertainty.

“Tons of nuclear waste have been generated and stored on site, and dealing with that will be a necessary challenge for the plant’s owners. In an era of climate change and impending sea level rise, and in an earthquake active state, it will be doubly important to make sure this waste doesn’t do future damage.

“As the utilities look to grow in the future, they now have better choices than they had 40 years ago. Solar, wind and other renewable energy technology have advanced dramatically in that time. We hope, especially, that the utilities will take this opportunity to help get more locally generated renewable energy, such as rooftop solar, into their portfolios.”

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Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club’s 13 chapters and more than 380,000 champions in California.