



United States Senate

August 30, 2022

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker, State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President pro Tempore, State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Speaker Rendon and President pro Tempore Atkins:

I am writing in support of SB 846, “Diablo Canyon powerplant: extension of operations,” introduced by Senator Dodd and Assemblymember Cunningham. Diablo Canyon, the last remaining nuclear power plant in the state, generates over 8 percent of California’s electricity, including 17 percent of the state’s carbon-free electricity, and is critical to the grid’s reliability. I urge the legislature to pass this bill to keep this Diablo Canyon operational while the state develops other renewable energy sources.

Since the 2016 agreement to decommission Diablo Canyon, the effects of climate change have both increased California’s need for energy and reduced the availability of hydropower due to record drought. In August 2020, extreme heat led to electricity shortages and the first rolling blackouts in the state since the 2001 energy crisis. The consequences would have been even more severe without the electricity from Diablo Canyon. State regulators have projected similar shortfalls and outages during periods of peak demand in the coming years, and retiring a major electricity generation source without adequate preparation will only leave the grid more vulnerable.

California has some of the most ambitious clean energy mandates in the world. However, despite massive investments and commitment, development of non-emitting renewable energy resources like wind, solar, and geothermal are not projected to be installed in time to meet California’s energy demand without power from Diablo Canyon. At this time, the alternative to the closure of the reactors at Diablo Canyon will most likely be additional natural gas generation, which would

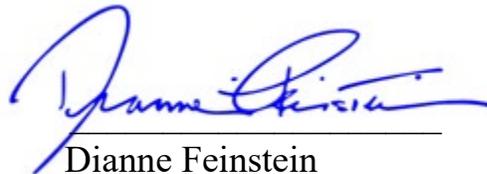
reverse progress on emissions reductions and worsen air quality. The state would be better served by a temporary extension of an existing carbon-free resource.

As you know, Congress provided \$6 billion through the U.S. Department of Energy's Civilian Nuclear Credit to preserve existing nuclear plants at risk of closure. Diablo Canyon's operator, Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), is a good candidate for this program, and a successful application will offset costs associated with the relicensing application and necessary capital improvements. In addition, the pending bill, SB 846, contains multiple provisions to ensure that ratepayers are protected and energy prices do not rise significantly.

As this process moves forward, I will continue to advocate for PG&E and state and federal regulators to take every step necessary to avoid accidents and ensure safe operation of the power plant. Ultimately, relicensing Diablo Canyon will depend on approval from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), which will conduct a thorough and rigorous safety and seismic review of the power plant, and confirm it is fit for extended operations. My staff has confirmed with the NRC that they are prepared to conduct this review in the necessary timeframe.

I applaud the work completed by the legislature this session, and reiterate my support for passage of SB 846 before you adjourn on August 31. The ability of California's energy system to meet state electricity needs in an environmentally responsible way depends on the extended operation of Diablo Canyon, and I urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure this occurs.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator