Proposed Bill

Senate Bill (SB) 657 codifies and requires the California Public Utilities Commission to convene an Independent Peer Review Panel to conduct an independent review of enhanced seismic studies and surveys of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, including the surrounding areas of the facility and areas of nuclear waste storage until January 1, 2025.

The Independent Peer Review Panel shall obtain expertise and participation from the Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, the California Geologic Survey, the California Coastal Commission, the California Seismic Safety Commission, the California Office of Emergency Services, and the County of San Luis Obispo.

Background

The Diablo Canyon Power Plant is owned and operated by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) and located on the California coast in San Luis Obispo County. The Plant is the only nuclear facility operating in the state and is licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Unit 1 is licensed to operate until 2024 and Unit 2 is licensed to operate until 2025.

California has many seismic faults and power plants may be vulnerable in the event of an earthquake. This has prompted the Legislature to require the Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission to plan and forecast this vulnerability as part of its Integrated Energy Policy Report (AB 1632, Statutes of 2006), which in turn encouraged the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to incorporate recommendations for enhanced seismic evaluations for Diablo Canyon.

Need for Legislation

The Independent Peer Review Panel’s contract with the CPUC is set to expire on November 30, 2015, even though it has not completed its review of PG&E’s studies and findings regarding the Diablo Canyon power Plant.

In order to ensure there is no break in the review process by the IPRP, SB 657 codifies the Panel and extends it oversight to coincide with Diablo Canyon’s licensure by the NRC.

After the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant in Japan, the NRC is requiring a re-evaluation of the risk that external hazards pose to Diablo Canyon, such as earthquakes, and on March 12, 2015, PG&E submitted a Seismic & Flooding Hazards Re-evaluation report.
Given that NRC’s re-evaluation will go beyond the IPRP’s contact date, the public would be best served if the IPRP could continue its work. SB 657 is a responsible state action to ensure the public’s safety with an independent peer review of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

**SUPPORT**

Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility
Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles
Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club
15 Individuals

**OPPOSITION**

None at this time

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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