A California nuclear power plant watchdog objected to Pacific Gas & Electric's proposal to collect more than $350 million from its customers, arguing that the order will aggravate the high outage rates that led to the plant's failure to operate. The utility's Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant's Unit 1 is a benchmark for nuclear outages between July 17, 2020, and Nov. 1, 2021, particularly for a collection of unplanned outages. The utility's Unit 1 complained to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in 2021 and the commission has yet to rule on the matter. The Alliance for Nuclear Responsibility said an extension of the aging power plant along the Central Coast would "inevitably encourage sloppier operating practices at Diablo Canyon." The Alliance seeks to have its testimony unredacted prior to the CPUC's Jan. 17, 2023 public hearing.

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California's enactment of state legislation in late 2020 to mid-2021, and $178.6 million in replacement power costs, which it stated was needed for grid reliability. In addition to the passage of SB 846 allowing a plant extension at least to 2030, the state included a $1.4 billion forgivable loan to PG&E to keep Diablo operating, which the company said was needed for grid reliability.

"The extraordinary size of these costs is a very bad omen for Diablo's post-2024 future," Rochelle Becker, the Alliance's executive director, warned Oct. 31. She added allowing cost recovery from PG&E customers "would inevitably encourage sloppier operating practices at Diablo Canyon." PG&E did not respond to a request for comments.

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