

The Future of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station



Southern California Edison (SCE) has begun the rigorous review process required prior to applying to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the renewal of the operating licenses of the two San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station reactors. Plant personnel have begun assessing whether San Onofre's systems and components can continue to operate safely through an additional 20-year period.

SCE is considering license renewal because of the growing importance of nuclear power to its customers and to California. San Onofre is the largest source of generation for a growing region, and is a "baseload" facility, meaning its power is available 24/7. In addition, the plant's generating process is virtually carbon-free, providing much needed support for California's ambitious climate-change initiatives. Also, San Onofre contributes to the diversity of SCE's power portfolio, thereby helping stabilize customer rates when the cost of fuels such as natural gas fluctuates.

Next Steps

The next step in San Onofre's license-renewal process will be submission to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) of a request for funding to process a license renewal application at the NRC. The CPUC filing, expected during the second half of 2010, will include a cost-effectiveness analysis that will allow the commission to determine if the plant's continued operation would be beneficial for utility customers and the state.



License Renewal Facts

- 57 U.S. commercial nuclear reactor units have received license renewals from the NRC – roughly half of the nation's fleet.
- There are no technical limitations that preclude U.S. commercial nuclear plants from operating safely beyond the original, 40-year license period.
- SCE is beginning the license-renewal assessment now because managing a major power system requires planning 10 to 20 years in advance to meet changing customer needs.

Plant Facts

- The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station is located San Clemente, Calif., and is the largest power plant in Southern California, generating about 2,200 megawatts (MW) of electricity or enough power to serve 1.4 million average homes at a point in time.
- The San Onofre plant is comprised of two pressurized water reactors similar in design to 69 of the 104 commercial reactors operating in the U.S.
- The plant is jointly owned by SCE (78.21%), San Diego Gas & Electric (20%), and the city of Riverside (1.79%).
- San Onofre Unit 2 went into commercial operation in 1983. Unit 3 began operation in 1984. Each unit can provide about 1,100 MW to the Southern California power grid. Unit 1 went into service Jan. 1, 1968, and was retired in 1992.

