

# Diablo is on top of recent seismic issues

**Loren Sharp, San Luis Obispo Tribune, 12-4-10**

Sharp is the senior director of engineering services for the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

The Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant has been generating safe, reliable and carbon-free electricity for our customers for decades.

Throughout that time, the power plant has consistently earned a strong safety record from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. That didn't happen by chance. The men and women working at Diablo Canyon put safety first in all aspects of their jobs, and we focus on seismic safety each and every day.

Our company recognizes geological safety is a critical component of the ongoing, safe operation of Diablo Canyon. Because of this, and as part of our original licenses to operate, Diablo Canyon is the only nuclear power plant in the United States with a long-term seismic program led by our team of expert, in-house geoscientists who continuously gather new data and work with the United States Geological Survey. Their findings are then independently reviewed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In her Dec. 2 Viewpoint, Rochelle Becker raised concerns about the seismic safety of the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant ("Answers before Diablo renewal"). As long as we operate the plant and provide electricity to our customers, we will be studying seismic issues. Our work in that arena will never be complete.

When it comes to seismic studies, we will never cease in our efforts to collect more data that could enhance operational safety. Seismic safety is integral to plant operations today and every day. It is not an issue that we wait to address in the context of license renewal, it is an issue that we address as part of ongoing operations of the power plant. Our existing operating licenses require us to do that.

Moreover, the safety of our families, neighbors and communities remains our No. 1 priority, and if the Nuclear Regulatory Commission ever concluded the plant was unsafe in any way, including seismically, it would not allow us to continue operating the plant.

Throughout Diablo Canyon's 25 years of operating history, continuous rigorous seismic research and analysis has allowed us to stay on top of seismic issues such as the 2008 discovery of the Shoreline fault.

Through the efforts of our long-term seismic program, we discovered the fault, we immediately reported it, we conducted in-depth studies on it and we came to the scientific conclusion that Diablo Canyon was designed and constructed to withstand a larger, more severe earthquake than the Shoreline fault is capable of generating. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission independently confirmed that assessment.

We are committed to continuing to provide safe, clean, reliable and affordable power to customers for years to come, and we are committed to continued analysis of important new seismic information.

Beginning the license-renewal process now will help us meet that commitment. We will keep providing new information to our regulators, the scientific community and our neighbors through normal regulatory means.

To date, PG&E has briefed the California Legislature, the governor's office, the California Energy Commission and the California Coastal Commission on the status of the Shoreline fault zone investigation and other long-

term seismic program activities, as well as provided the California Energy Commission and the California Public Utilities Commission with the most up-to-date seismic information available.

On Dec. 16, we will be hosting a Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant open house at the PG&E Energy Education Center in San Luis Obispo (6588 Ontario Road). Members of our community are invited to learn more information on a variety of topics about Diablo Canyon.

The open house will run from 4 to 7 p.m. and will feature experts on license renewal and seismic safety, as well as the economic and environmental benefits of Diablo Canyon. We are committed to maintaining and building the strong open dialogue on Diablo Canyon and look forward to seeing you there.