

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace
PO Box 3608
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403
mothersforpeace.org



March 18, 2025

Patricia K. Poppe
Chief Executive Officer
Pacific Gas and Electric Corporation
77 Beale Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Ms. Poppe,

San Luis Obispo **Mothers for Peace** expects you to uphold PG&E's commitment to **test for embrittlement of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant Unit 1 reactor vessel by removing and testing Capsule B in April of 2025. As approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in 2023, PG&E is scheduled to remove the capsule this spring and report the test results to the NRC within 18 months of the capsule withdrawal.**

We are compelled to send this letter because of previous failures by PG&E to test the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant for embrittlement. We agree with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals when they state:

We share Petitioners' concerns about the public health and safety implications of repeatedly postponing Capsule B's withdrawal. It has been about two decades since PG&E withdrew and tested a surveillance capsule from the Unit 1 reactor vessel—and even longer since a surveillance capsule withdrawn from Unit 1 generated credible data. Although Unit 1's operating license has now officially expired, the reactor continues to operate under the NRC's "timely 10 renewal" rule because PG&E has submitted a license renewal application. San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, 100 F.4th at 1056–58 (citing 10 C.F.R. § 2.109(b)). Capsule B remains a key source of data for the license renewal period. Under the current schedule, PG&E is slated to remove Capsule B in the spring of 2025 and use it to inform the company's pending license renewal application for Unit 1. Any further delay in Capsule B's withdrawal will mean that PG&E lacks a critical data source about the future integrity of the reactor vessel, without which a future license renewal may be subject to legal challenge.

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace v. NRC, 2025 U.S. App. LEXIS 1104 at *10 (9th Cir.) January 17, 2025

The pressure vessel holds the highly radioactive reactor core and plays a critical role in the protection of the public and workers. During a loss of coolant accident, if it becomes necessary to cool the core by adding water from the emergency core cooling system, an embrittled reactor vessel can crack due to pressurized thermal shock. If the reactor vessel cracks and the core can no longer be cooled, a meltdown could follow resulting in an unfathomable disaster.

This concern is all the more serious with respect to Diablo Canyon Unit 1, given its status as one of the most embrittled reactor vessels in the United States. The Unit 1 reactor vessel was built with faulty material has been flagged as especially vulnerable to embrittlement. It is crucial that there be no more delays and that the testing for embrittlement is completed on schedule. The public, legislators, regulators, and PG&E must know if the Unit 1 pressure vessel is safe to operate.

We note that the recent rod drop incident in August of 2024 that PG&E claims was caused by corrosion, is yet another example of the unacceptable risks associated with PG&E's operation of the aged nuclear plant.

It is more imperative than ever that you keep your commitment to the promised testing schedule of Capsule B and conduct the required review processes in an expedited fashion to ensure the continued safety of workers and surrounding residents, particularly in light of consideration of extending the life of this aging nuclear plant.

Sincerely,

San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace

Board Members: Jane Swanson, Linda Seeley, Jill ZamEk, Linda Parks, Sherry Lewis, Julie Mansfield-Wells, Marty Brown, Molly Johnson

cc: Senator John Laird, Assemblymember Salud Carbajal, Senator Alex Padilla, Senator Adam Schiff, Governor Gavin Newsom, San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors