State Senate Hearing to Eye Life After San Onofre

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A state Senate committee planned a hearing with California's chief energy officials Wednesday to discuss the lost electricity, lost jobs and other consequences of the permanent shutdown of the San Onofre nuclear power plant that was announced last month.

The Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee, chaired by Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Los Angeles, was scheduled to hear from officials from San Onofre's operator Southern California Edison, commissioners from the California Public Utilities Commission and the chief executive of the California Independent System Operator.

Edison announced June 7 that it was permanently closing San Onofre. Its twin reactors hadn't produced electricity since January 2012, after a small radiation leak led to the discovery of damage to hundreds of tubes that carry radioactive water in nearly new steam generators. The problems arose just after a $670 million upgrade to the plant

San Onofre was a key part of California's energy supply both because of the more than 2,000 megawatts it produced but its strategic coastal location between San Diego and Los Angeles. It was able to power 1.4 million homes and was responsible for about 20 percent of the electricity used by San Diego and southern Orange County.

Since the shutdown, utilities have upgraded transmission lines and increased generation at other plants, businesses have been paid to shift consumption to off-peak hours and consumers have been paid to have their air conditioners automatically shut down during heat waves.

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