CA Recommends Refunds For Nuclear Shutdown

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California regulators on Tuesday recommended $94 million in refunds for Southern California utility customers for reduced operating costs at the now-closed San Onofre nuclear power plant.

The California Public Utilities Commission said in a statement that the operating costs were "neither reasonable nor necessary" and are just a portion of what Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric owe customers.

"The proposed decision is the first in a series that evaluates costs to ensure customers don't pay for both the power plant that was shut down and the power that had to be purchased to replace it," agency Commissioner Mike Florio said. "The CPUC is considering hundreds of millions of dollars in additional refunds to customers."

The proposed decision by the agency's administrative law judges recommends that Southern California Edison refund $74.2 million and part-owner San Diego Gas & Electric refund $19.3 million. The commission will consider the recommendation next month.

SoCal Edison spokeswoman Maureen Brown said the utility was reviewing the proposed decision and had no immediate comment.

A SDG&E spokeswoman had no immediate comment.

The plant was shut down in January 2012 after a small radiation leak led to the discovery of damaged tubing.

Edison closed the plant for good earlier this year.

The proposed decision found that an "unsound decision-making process" led Edison to continue spending money on a restart plan for San Onofre after May 2012, and faulted the utility for not considering "cost effectiveness or alternatives ... or realistically assess the regulatory hurdles blocking a reasonably foreseeable restart."

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