

## **ENERGY: SDG&E says it's ready for summer heat**

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San Diegans ought to have a blackout-free summer despite the shutdown of the nuclear plant at San Onofre, San Diego Gas & Electric Co. executives and state officials said Thursday.

Thanks to the imminent activation of a high-energy transmission line and the restoration of a power plant in Huntington Beach, San Diego County should have enough power to withstand even a hot summer, executives said at a public hearing in San Diego on Thursday.

However, the region will lean heavily on older plants such as the 58-year-old Encina Power Station in Carlsbad, and the power grid could be slightly more at risk for a problem than in a normal summer.

To insulate against that chance, SDG&E and regulators implemented conservation plans. But mostly, they said, the region shouldn't have a problem.

"We feel very sure that we have planned for the worst-case scenario," said Jessie Knight, CEO of SDG&E. "We have planned for all contingencies for reliability. What we have done is added on some extra safeguards as part of this program."

Southern California Edison shut down the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in January to investigate problems with newly installed steam generators. The plants have been off-line ever since, and last week Edison said both units would remain out of commission until September at the earliest.

San Onofre had produced 2,200 megawatts of power, of which SDG&E got 440 megawatts. Last year, San Diego and Southern Orange counties received 21 percent of their power from the nuclear plant.

Some of the lost power will be replaced by energy carried by the Sunrise Powerlink, a 117-mile transmission line that links San Diego County to Imperial County. The utility plans to put the line into service this weekend.

"It will instantaneously bring 800 megawatts into the region," said Mike Niggli, chief operating officer for SDG&E.

In addition to the power imported over Sunrise, regulators brought the 440-megawatt Huntington Beach plant back into service, and they've been leaning heavily on the 958-megawatt Encina Power Station in Carlsbad.

Executives and regulators said these measures should provide enough power to the region, even if there are sustained heat waves ---- and even if one of the older, creakier plants should break down.

But just in case, the utilities and the California Independent System Operator expect to ask customers to conserve over the summer.

SDG&E launched "Reduce your Use" days last week, in which customers will get credit for reducing their electricity consumption on hot days, and the California Independent System Operator can call "Flex Alerts," which encourage customers to conserve by reducing their air conditioning and using appliances after 6 p.m.

"At this stage, we're well-prepared to deal with the various contingencies," said Robert Weisenmiller, chairman of the California Energy Commission.