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Poll suggests 80 percent of Arizonans favor keeping NGS running
Katherine Locke - Reporter

PAGE, Ariz. - A poll sponsored by the Arizona Coalition for Water, Energy and Jobs suggests a majority of Arizonans favor keeping Navajo Generating Station (NGS) up and running.
The poll, conducted by national pollster Magellan Strategies of Colorado, said 80 percent of Arizonans
are opposed to the technical working group's "back-room deal-making aimed at the early shut down of NGS."
The technical working group includes representatives from Salt River Project (SRP) on behalf of itself and the owners of NGS, the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, the Defense Fund, the Navajo Nation, the Gila River Indian community, the U.S. Department of Interior and Western Resource advocates.
SRP will play host to a community meeting on Aug. 15 to discuss the technical working group's proposal for NGS. The meeting takes place at the Page PERA Club, 445 Haul Road., Page, Ariz. at 5:30 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.
Grant Smedley, SRP's manager of environmental policy and innovation, will explain the proposal, which
was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on July 26.
"We are hoping the open house forum hosted by SRP on Aug. 15 will help educate the local community and prepare them to participate in the formal EPA comment process which will come later
in the fall," said Robert Talbot, NGS plant manager.
The technical group identified emission reduction alternatives for NGS. The group said its proposed alternative allows the continued operation of NGS, while achieving greater emission reductions than EPA's proposal issued earlier this year even while committing to cease operation of coal-fired generation at NGS no later than Dec. 22, 2044.
For some groups that is not soon enough. Black Mesa Water Coalition opposed the NGS lease agreement extension citing what they called an unreasonable time period allowed for public comment
and the lack of data and information disseminated to the public. They also stated the direct impacts felt by Navajo communities, ranging from social to ecological effects, like the relocation of Black Mesa families and the severe damage to pristine aquifers.
The group highlighted many environmental concerns and questioned whether the lease agreement had a plan that would transition from coal jobs to solar and wind energy and would provide long-term
and sustainable Navajo jobs.
The EPA's Feb. 15 proposal requires the power plant's owners to install new technology to reduce emissions on all three units at NGS by 2018.8/14/13 Navajo-Hopi Observer | Poll suggests 80percent of Arizonans favor keeping NGS running

The EPA also proposed an alternative that would require the early installation of low nitrogen oxide burners in exchange for a later date to require the installation of technology to reduce emissions, selective catalytic reduction (SCR), on one unit per year between 2021 and 2023.
The alternative proposed by the working group would require SRP to shut down one unit at the power
plant by January 1, 2020 and put in place reduction emission technology on the remaining units by 2030 - if plant part owners LA Department of Power and Water and Nevada Energy exit in 2019 and if
the Navajo Nation chooses not to exercise its option to purchase a portion of the plant's ownership shares. The Los Angeles water agency and Nevada Energy own about one unit at NGS.
If the Navajo Nation does exercise its right to purchase a portion of the plant's ownership shares, the working group proposal requires nitrogen oxide emission reductions equivalent to the shutdown of one
unit between 2020 and 2030. The owners would have to submit annual plans beginning in 2020 through the end of the lease describing operating scenarios to achieve greater emission reductions than the EPA's proposed rule.
Under both scenarios, the owners commit to cease operation of conventional coal-fired generation at
NGS no later than Dec. 22, 2044.
While some groups find the technical group's alternative proposal vague, Navajo Nation Director of Communication Erny Zah said that with a complex situation with many variables, it is difficult to come
up with a clear path from one point to another.
"This plan says how we are going to get from A to B and this is how we're going to get there, eventually, whether this happens or this happens or this happens, this is how we're going to get from
A to B," Zah said. "The point is that we have a direction to go with, not so much exactly how we're going to get there because right now there are too many variables."
He added, "This plan outlines that yes, we are concerned with the integrity of the emissions of this power plant, this is the state of the ownership of the plant currently and here are the different ways we plan to continue to get the emissions to come out in a higher degree of cleanliness. At the end of the day, it is still going to end up with SCR's on the units."
U.S. Sen. Jeff Flake said that he appreciated the Department of Interior's willingness to work with a diverse group of Arizona stakeholder to identify a solution.
"I look forward to learning more about the best elements of the best available retrofit technology alternative, including those troubling aspects of the proposal that appear unrelated to EPA's regional haze rulemaking," Flake said. "My hope is that we can find a productive path forward that protects the many Arizonans who rely on NGS."

Thanks,

- - Niloufar

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