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## CHULA VISTA

# Power plant could close next spring

### Action may come earlier than previously revealed

By Tanya Sierra  
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An e-mail between officials at SDG&E and the organization that manages the state's power supply indicates the South Bay Power Plant that dominates the Chula Vista skyline could be out of commission sooner than previously revealed.

Officials announced last month that half the power plant's two generators would be decommissioned at the end of the year. But an e-mail between Jim Avery, SDG&E's vice president of power supply, and the state's Independent System Operator show they had been discussing the imminent fate of the remaining generators as well.

The e-mail said reliance on the remaining generators could come to an end in March or April, as more power sources come online. Avery asked ISO officials to write a letter to the city of Chula Vista explaining that the remaining two generators would not be needed much longer.

Just days before, ISO told Dynegy, which leases and operates the 49-year-old facility, that its "must run" status on two of its four generators would not be renewed.

"Would it be possible for you to send a letter to the City of Chula Vista outlining our discussions this morning?" Avery

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## POWER PLANT

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wrote in an Oct. 12 e-mail to Jim Detmers, the vice president of operations for ISO.

"I am trying to settle this very contentious issue down before it erupts into law suits (sic) and a

full blown media circus," Avery wrote. "I plan to share this information with the water quality board later today, but I believe a letter from you would go along (sic) way to make the peace in the city."

Mayor Cheryl Cox said she never received a letter and did not know about the exchange.

Stephanie McCorkle, a spokeswoman for ISO, denied that an agreement was made and said Detmers did not respond to Avery's e-mail because an energy analysis is under way.

Last month, Councilman Steve Castaneda said officials from both agencies told him the South Bay Power Plant is no longer needed.

City officials are eager to see the power plant dismantled and the prime bay-front real estate on which it sits developed for other uses. They and environmentalists accused ISO of flip-flopping in what it would take to decom-

mission the generators during a panel discussion yesterday in Chula Vista hosted by the South County Economic Development Council.

"The problem with the ISO is you always get a different answer from them," said Laura Hunter of the Environmental Health Coalition.

In January 2008, the ISO said two of three requirements must be met before the power plant could be decommissioned. They include an Otay Mesa plant, which came online last month, more peaker plants being built and the Sunrise Powerlink being completed.

Those requirements have been met, but the plant has still not been decommissioned, Hunter said.

"This is an ever-changing story," she said. McCorkle said the ISO frequently re-evaluates its energy needs.

"If people mistakenly take that as different answers, they need to look at the time frame when the analysis was performed," she said. "We are constantly updating our technical analysis."

Next week, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control will consider whether to renew the power plant's water permit, which is needed to run its cooling system. The plant takes in water from San Diego Bay, which can kill and damage large quantities of larvae and fish.

The Chula Vista City Council and other elected state, local and federal representatives are urging the water agency to deny the permit. If the permit is denied, the plant won't operate, Dynegy executive Dan Thompson said during the panel discussion.

Even if the plant were decommissioned by next spring, it would take two years to secure the permitting to tear it down, Thompson said.