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Dozens of people voice concerns over South Bay Power Plant

By [Staff](#), City News Service

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 About five dozen people attended a meeting of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board Wednesday to voice opposition to a proposal to extend the South Bay Power Plant's current pollution permit.

Brian Kelley, the SDRWQB's senior engineer, said the board directed staff during Wednesday's informational meeting to set an official public hearing on whether to extend the permit as soon as November.

"The board sort of felt this is a very critical issue for San Diego. That's why they want to bring the hearing back as soon as possible," Kelley said.

Environmentalists, residents and elected officials alike want to see the closure of the 50-year-old power plant on the Chula Vista waterfront, arguing it is harmful to fish and a hindrance to bayfront development.

They want concrete plans to get rid of the natural-gas plant or convert it into a more environmentally friendly power generating unit, Kelley said. State energy officials consider the plant critical to ensuring a reliable supply of electricity in the region.

Opponents want the board to overrule its staff's decision to keep the plant's current pollution permit in place for up to five years. Without any action from the board, the permit will expire in November.

According to Kelly, the SDRWQB is waiting for the State Water Control Resources Board to finalize its policy on the 19 coastal power plants in California before it acts.

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