several public meetings have been held. A recent ruling by an adjudicatory arm of the NRC, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, creates further uncertainty regarding when a final decision might be made on restarting Unit 2. Additional administrative processes and appeals could result in delay of more than a year. During this period, the costs of maintaining SONGS in a state of readiness to restart and the costs to replace the power SONGS previously provided would continue. Moreover, it is uneconomic for SCE and its customers to bear the long-term repair costs for returning SONGS to full power operation without restart of Unit 2. SCE has concluded that efforts are better focused on planning for the replacement generation and transmission resources which will be required for grid reliability."

Plant decommissioning continues to this day. The dismantlement process is ongoing with various activities, including removing equipment from the containment buildings and turbine building component removal and demolition.

From 1968 to 2012, in addition to being a strong baseload source of electricity, SONGS supported Southern California with economic resources in the form of tax revenue and thousands of job opportunities. Even during decommissioning, SONGS continues to support the nuclear community by providing jobs during dismantlement and educational opportunities about the decommissioning process to both students and professionals.

Jeremy Hampshire is an ANS member whose avocation is writing about nuclear science and technology’s history. His experience includes time as a lead nuclear quality assurance auditor and a senior nuclear technical advisor.

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