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CGS nuclear plant: Is 30 years of operation enough?

April 30, 2013 | By [Barbara Vergetis Lundin](#)

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Economist Robert McCullough of McCullough Research, will examine the business case for an early retirement of the Columbia Generating Station (CGS) nuclear power plant, after being hired by the Washington and Oregon chapters of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), a 50,000 member national health professionals' organization, to determine whether or not early closure would be good for Pacific Northwest ratepayers and utilities. As part of the examination, PSR and McCullough Research will consult with regional utilities and power marketing officials.

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The CGS plant is the last remaining nuclear power plant in the Northwest and was the only one of five plants finished that the Washington Public Power Supply System attempted to construct in the 1970s and 80s and contains a boiling water reactor like those in Fukushima, Japan. The plant has been operating for more than 30 years on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation and provides 3.9 percent of the region's electricity through a contract with the Bonneville Power Administration.

"At a time when the utility is considering making major repairs, it seems only fair to the region's ratepayers that they have an honest appraisal of the financial value of this plant," said Oregon PSR chapter president Dr. John Pearson.

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The market price of regional electricity in the Pacific Northwest has now fallen below the price of operating the plant.

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