

# Trump endorsements for Corp. Comm. incumbents doubtful

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The Republican Corporation Commission is defending the closure of Arizona Public Service’s Cholla Power Plant after President Donald Trump and local Republican activists called for it to remain open.

APS closed the coal-fired plant on March 17 after a 10-year process due to federal regulations imposed by former President Barack Obama’s administration. On April 10, Trump signed an executive order to deregulate coal mining and save Cholla from closure.

However, APS told commissioners during a hearing on April 24 that operating Cholla remains “uneconomic” for its customers due to ongoing Environmental Protection Agency regulations. The company also said bringing the plant back online would be too expensive for ratepayers.

“We’re all aware of the detrimental loss of electric capacity with the closure of Arizona coal plants, and in part because of ongoing EPA regulations, it is a day late and a dollar short when it comes to re-opening the Cholla plant,” said commission Vice Chair Nick Myers.. “Trying to re-open Cholla at this point would result in significantly higher rates for customers.”

One commissioner, Rachel Walden, voiced frustrations with Republican activists who accused the all-GOP body of not following orders from Trump. Tyler Bowyer, an executive at Turning Point Action, wrote in a post on X that the commission was “working against the Trump Administration and pushing to close all Coal Plants in AZ.”

Walden responded in a lengthy post on X after Bowyer said she privately contacted him to explain the situation. She said many Republicans were sharing the post without understanding the full context.

“This is assumption driven narration at best,” Walden wrote in her post. “The vast majority of people do not follow Commission meetings or news, and when we post our press releases they get very little engagement.”

The commission issued a press release on the Cholla closure today and said it is working with Tucson Electric Power on its closure of the coal-fired Springerville Generating Station in 2027. TEP and the commission are looking into repurposing the coal-fired units with nuclear or natural gas generation.

APS is also exploring the potential for repurposing the infrastructure at Cholla for nuclear or natural gas generation. The closures and repurposing of plants could put Arizona utilities at odds with Trump, who aims to revitalize the U.S. coal industry.

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