

Holtec to Decide by January Whether to Reopen Michigan Nuclear Plant

- State's governor has called for Palisades plant to restart
- Reopening the shuttered reactor 'might become reality'

By [Will Wade](#)

October 26, 2022 at 4:50 PM EDT



Holtec International, the top US provider of nuclear-plant decommissioning services, expects to decide by January whether to reopen a Michigan reactor that shut down in May.

A key factor is whether the company receives federal funding under a US Energy Department program aimed at providing aid to struggling nuclear plants, according to Patrick O'Brien, Holtec's director of government affairs and communications.

Holtec took over the Palisades plant in June from Entergy Corp., which has said the facility was no longer economically viable. Reactors have struggled to compete against cheaper and cleaner natural gas and renewables, with a dozen US facilities having closed in the past decade. No US nuclear site has ever been restarted after shutting down, according to O'Brien, but the chances of Palisades being brought back online began to improve after Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer voiced support for the idea in September.

"There's a growing sentiment that the ability to reopen Palisades might become reality," O'Brien said Wednesday.

Holtec would face some challenges, including finding workers for the plant, since many have already retired or moved to other Entergy sites. Jupiter, Florida-based Holtec specializes in tearing down retired

reactors and would have to find a company to run Palisades. The plant would also need new fuel rods, and would require maintenance before it could go back into service.

Additionally, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would have to approve restarting Palisades, a process O'Brien said could be onerous.

Holtec applied in July for funding under the federal Civil Nuclear Credit Program, and Whitmer has endorsed the plan, which would bolster Michigan's economy and reduce carbon emissions linked to climate change.

"There are some hurdles to cross," O'Brien said, "but nothing insurmountable."