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February 19, 2018

Ms. Natalie Jimenez
Chief Public Information Officer
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
313 N Figueroa St., # 212
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Ms. Natalie Jimenez:¹

We have attached a notice that was sent to residents of Porter Ranch and surrounding areas regarding the leak that occurred at Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility on the evening of December 18, 2017. The Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council has a concern regarding the statement below, which is contained in the third paragraph of the notification:

"The release did not present a health or safety risk to the community."

We believe this statement to be false and misleading to the thousands of County residents receiving it since no public health study has been performed to date on the effects of the releases from the facility. Indeed, the County's own Department of Health has stated in February, 2017, the following (see attached):

"The disaster that occurred at Aliso Canyon is a singular, unprecedented event. There has never been such an extraordinary toxic release, so we are in uncharted waters in determining what health impacts, if any, could result in the long-term from the exposure."

Moreover, SoCalGas' own material sent with the gas bill to every customer inform customers that *"natural gas, ..., and equipment and vehicle exhaust-found at and around [SoCalGas's] facilities ... contain substances ... known to cause cancer or reproductive harm."*

Therefore, it is clearly premature from a public health standpoint, for anyone to falsely state that there are no risks or health effects and give residents a false sense of safety. Since this

¹ The opinions expressed in this letter are those of the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council and not necessarily those of the City of Los Angeles.

Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

is a matter of public health, we believe it calls for a clarification from your Department in the form of a press release to make sure residents are aware that any health risks associated with exposure to the Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility releases are yet to be determined.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

Sincerely,
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council



Issam Najm, Ph.D., P.E.
Board President

Encl: Notice from SoCalGas regarding Gas release of December 18, 2017
LA County DPH Document titled: "An Appropriate Health Study for Residents Affected by the Aliso Canyon Gas Release", February 16, 2017.

cc: Kathryn Barger, County Supervisor (kathyrn@lacounty.gov)
Mitchell Englander, Councilmember Dist. 12 (councilmember.englander@lacity.org)
Scott Schmerelson, LAUSD School Board Member (scott.schmerelson@lausd.net)
Henry Stern, State Senator (senator.stern@senate.ca.gov)
Dante Acosta, Assembly Member (assemblymember.acosta@assembly.ca.gov)
Chatsworth Neighborhood Council (cnc@empowerla.org)
Granada Hills North NC (ghnnc@empowerla.org)
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North Hills East NC (nhenc@empowerla.org)
Northridge West NC (nwnc@empowerla.org)
Northridge South NC (nsnc@empowerla.org)



Community Notification - Aliso Canyon

Dear North San Fernando Valley community member:

This evening at approximately 4:55 p.m., there was an unplanned release of natural gas at the Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Storage Facility.

The release occurred during a routine operation to pressurize equipment following maintenance. The equipment is used in the dehydration process that removes water from natural gas. A flange gasket on the equipment did not function properly resulting in the release.

Immediate actions were taken to control the release, and it was stopped within approximately 50 minutes. The release did not present a health or safety risk to the community. However, the odor may have been noticeable to people near the facility.

In addition, the release was detected on the fence-line monitoring system along the border with the community. The highest reading on the fence-line monitors was approximately 66 parts per million. Since the release was stopped those readings have returned to normal levels. The online portal that allows community members to view data from the fence-line monitoring system is currently off-line. SoCalGas is troubleshooting the cause of the website outage.

SoCalGas has notified the appropriate state and local agencies about the release.

For the latest news and information about Aliso Canyon or to sign up for our community notification program, visit socalgas.com/alisoupdates.

Make sure you receive our emails by adding webmaster@socalgas.messages2.com to your address book. Please do not reply to this email. Email sent to this address cannot be answered. For assistance, please visit our [Help Center](#). Southern California Gas Company values your privacy. For more information, view our [Privacy Policy](#) and [Privacy Notice](#).

Sender's business address is 555 West Fifth Street, GT20B2, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

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An Appropriate Health Study for Residents Affected by the Aliso Canyon Gas Release

Background

In the settlement reached this month between Southern California Gas (SCG) and the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), a scope of work entitled "Health Study" was included as an attachment. That scope is inconsistent with the scope of work previously agreed-upon by a panel of health experts convened by AQMD in the fall of 2016. The AQMD panel included experts from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (County Public Health), OEHHA, the CDPH, the CARB, the USEPA, SCAQMD, and academic researchers from the USC and UC Irvine.

In March 2016, County Public Health began discussions with SCAQMD on the direction and scope of the health study. Around the same time, Assemblyman Wilk introduced Assembly Bill 1903, which recognized the need and called for a comprehensive long-term health study. That bill would have required CPUC to authorize the State OEHHA to study the long-term health impacts on individuals who resided within a 12-mile radius of the Aliso Canyon facility. The scope of the OEHHA health study was estimated to cost approximately \$12.9 million for the first three years, and thereafter, \$3.3 million annually beginning in the fourth year and continuing until the end of 2028. In summary, OEHHA envisioned that the study would continue for 7 to 10 years, with a projected total cost in the range of \$35-40 million.

It appears that AB 1903 was placed in suspense in August 2016, in deference to an apparent pathway for SCAQMD and SCG to define an appropriate health study through the SCAQMD Abatement Order. However, SCAQMD and SCG could not agree on the scope, prompting a civil lawsuit. Subsequently, SCAQMD convened the panel of health experts referenced above on October 26, 2016 to provide the legal case with the appropriate scope and general design of the study. The expert panel agreed in December 2016 to a recommended scope for the SCAQMD health study, which County Public Health believes would have cost in the range of \$35-40 million, similar to the initial scope proposed by OEHHA.

It appears, however, that once AB 1903 was suspended in August, 2016, SCG began to actively negotiate with SCAQMD for a study design that was substantially reduced in scope. This ultimately led to settlement of the AQMD lawsuit. Neither the \$1 million allocation nor the scope included in the SCG-SCAQMD settlement addresses the components of a meaningful health study, and will likely not contribute useful information to any prospective health study in the future nor answer many of the questions that are important to affected community members. The health study defined by the SCAQMD panel of health experts is described below.

Recommended Scope of Health Study

Based on the existing data, the SCAQMD panel of health experts agreed that the health study would examine health outcomes associated with toxic releases from the facility, and monitor the health and well-being of exposed members of the population over several years. This long-term health study would also include, but not be limited to:

- Advanced environmental risk modeling to estimate community exposures
- Estimation of long-term toxicological risks

- Filling existing data gaps, particularly with respect to sulfur odorants
- Continuous air monitoring at the field and in the community to evaluate ongoing exposures
- Evaluation of broader impacts of the gas leak on quality of life and well-being
- Community engagement throughout the health study process

Need for Health Study

The disaster that occurred at Aliso Canyon is a singular, unprecedented event. There has never been such an extraordinary toxic release, so we are in uncharted waters in determining what health impacts, if any, could result in the long-term from the exposure. To not demand an appropriate health study would be to deny the facts of the situation and ignore the health needs of the affected community.

It is important to remember that DPH determined that the likely cause of the illnesses observed in residents of Porter Ranch were the unknown chemicals that SCG injected into the well in late October 2015 in an effort to plug the well. As highlighted in DPH reports, the observed symptoms (including nosebleeds and extensive contact sensitivity) could not be explained by what is known about methane gas, the odorants, or the trace carcinogens contained in the gas emissions.

In acknowledging the need for a long-term study, County Public Health is acknowledging two facts: First, the exact causative agent of the observed symptoms remains unknown (and SCG has repeatedly refused to provide the information that is needed about what was injected, and subsequently expelled, from the well). Second, it is biologically plausible that a chemical agent that can cause massive, moderately severe symptoms in a broad population could cause long-term chronic health effects, including dermatologic, respiratory, cardiovascular and immune system problems, and possibly even cancer. Only a long-term study that is prospective in nature (i.e., a duration of at least several years) and has sufficient sample size to detect rare chronic diseases is adequate to answer obvious health questions (e.g., Can this exposure cause chronic lung disease, cancer, or other chronic conditions?).

The health study will benefit the community by assuring residents that the County and the scientific community cares about their health concerns; that the medical care required to treat possible long-term health effects related to the exposure can be reimbursed by SCG; and that residents who have been exposed to this extraordinary event can have confidence that their concerns about the health effects of this exposure are being studied in an appropriate manner.

It is imperative that we support a health study that is appropriate to the scale and significance of this event; that would hold SCG accountable for potentially very serious health consequences which it has caused; and that would plow new ground in defining the accountability that municipal governments require in finding solutions to problems that are created by the close proximity of hazardous industries to highly populated communities.