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Governor Brown Finally Declares Emergency - Aliso Canyon Storage Facility Natural Gas Leak

Seventy-five (75) days after Southern California Gas Company discovered that Standard-Seson Well number 25 (SS-25) was leaking large quantities of natural gas from its Aliso Canyon Storage Field in northern San Fernando Valley, Governor Brown finally declared a State of Emergency. Attached find a pair of 6 January 2016 articles from the Sacramento Bee and The New York Times regarding this declaration. These articles outline some of the problems associated with California's focus on so-called "Clean Natural Gas." Unfortunately, the draft version of the 2015 IEPR shows a strong focus on natural gas.

Instead, policy leaders and regulators should be advocating for an expansion of nuclear power in California. Sadly, the latter common-sense approach to cutting emissions and halting the advance of global warming has been shouted down by a small group of vocal activists and "nonprofit" organizations. Many nuclear power opponents do not have significant science or engineering backgrounds.

With approximately a month until the scheduled adoption of the 2015 IEPR on 10 February 2016, there is still time to shift the focus of California power production to truly clean nuclear power in the final version of the 2015 IEPR.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

JANUARY 6, 2016 1:39 PM

Jerry Brown declares emergency around Southern California gas leak

Democratic governor calls for well's owner to make up for methane emissions elsewhere

Brown also wants more stringent monitoring

Critics say action 'too little, too late'



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In this Dec. 9, 2015 file photo, crews work on a relief well at the Aliso Canyon facility above the Porter Ranch area of Los Angeles. The escape of tons of natural gas from under a Los Angeles neighborhood is taking months to stop because of pressure from the leak. The leak at Porter Ranch started in October, and likely won't be fixed for at least two more months. Officials have relocated several thousand residents who said the stench made them sick. (Dean Musgrove/Los Angeles Daily News via AP, Pool, File) Dean Musgrove AP

By David Siders

dsiders@sacbee.com

Gov. Jerry Brown on Wednesday declared a state of emergency around the massive natural gas leak in Southern California, ordering stepped up containment efforts and demanding that the owner of the well pay for emission-reduction projects elsewhere to make up for the disaster's effect on the atmosphere.

The leak, from a well near the Los Angeles neighborhood of Porter Ranch, has been venting massive amounts of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, since October.

In his order, the Democratic governor vowed to ensure that Southern California Gas Co. covers costs related to the leak, as well as a state program to make up for the leak's methane emissions with other projects in California.

Brown, who visited the area this week, said Wednesday that the state will continue its prohibition against Southern California Gas injecting gas into the Aliso Canyon Storage facility until a review of the wells and air quality in the area is finished. He said he will also convene a panel of scientific and medical experts to review public health concerns around the leak.

Efforts to stop the leak have so far proved unsuccessful. Brown ordered state agencies to press Southern California Gas to detail how it will stop the gas leak if pumping gas through relief wells fails to close the leaking well.

Brown also called for more stringent monitoring of natural gas wells throughout the state and ordered a report from administration officials on "the long-term viability of natural gas storage facilities in California."

Brown has come under criticism from some activists for the timing of his response, which the Center for Biological Diversity said Wednesday was "too little, too late."

"Gov. Brown's slow response is especially disturbing because state regulators' hands-off approach to underground injection helped set the stage for this catastrophe," the center's Maya Golden-Krasner said in a prepared statement. **"The state has known for years that aging natural gas infrastructure was a disaster waiting to happen, but officials mostly ignored those risks."**

David Siders: 916-321-1215, @davidsiders

The New York Times

Governor Declares Emergency Over Los Angeles Gas Leak

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/01/07/us/california-governor-declares-emergency-over-los-angeles-gas-leak.html>



Equipment was in place in November to help stop the flow of natural gas leaking from a storage well at the Southern California Gas Company utility's Aliso Canyon facility.

JAVIER MENDOZA / SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GAS CO., VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

By IAN LOVETT

January 6, 2016

LOS ANGELES — Natural gas has been spewing into the air in the Porter Ranch neighborhood here since late October, sickening residents, prompting thousands to evacuate their homes and pouring greenhouse gas into the atmosphere.

Gov. [Jerry Brown](#), faced with mounting public anger and no end in sight to the leak, declared a state of emergency on Wednesday for the neighborhood of about 30,000 at the edge of the San Fernando Valley. And residents — who have been demanding to know why the Southern California Gas Company cannot fix the leak to its [natural gas](#) storage well, and whether the company will compensate them for their lost property values and health problems — want to know why it has taken so long.

“This is the equivalent of the BP oil spill, except it’s on land, in a populated community,” said Mitchell Englander, the Los Angeles city councilman who represents Porter Ranch. “This is one of the most disruptive, catastrophic environmental events that I’ve seen. It’s a truly chaotic crisis.”

Already, more than 2,000 families have left this affluent suburb because of the terrible smell and its side effects, which include nosebleeds, headaches, [dizziness](#) and [vomiting](#).



Crews at work last month on a relief well near Porter Ranch in California.

POOL PHOTO BY DEAN MUSGROVE

Health officials have been testing the air quality in the area and insist there are no long-term health risks, though short-term effects like the ones residents have cited are common, and result not from the gas but rather from chemicals put into the gas so humans can smell it.

So while the long-term effects of the leak may not amount to much, in the short term the problem has caused mayhem. Erin Brockovich, the environmental activist who successfully took Pacific Gas and Electric Company to task over groundwater contamination, has held community meetings to discuss the leak’s effects. The Federal Aviation Administration has ordered a no-fly-zone over Porter Ranch for safety reasons. **The leak, buried deep in the ground at a giant gas field that stores energy for distribution around Southern California, now accounts for about 25 percent of the methane emitted in California each day. Methane is a highly potent greenhouse gas that contributes to [climate change](#).**

In declaring the state of emergency, Mr. Brown said that he acted in response to the “prolonged and continuing” nature of the leak, which was detected Oct. 23.

To those whose lives have been upended by the leak, the situation has long qualified as a disaster, and the governor’s delay has been one of many sources of frustration.

Sharon Mousavi-Dormani is among those who have moved away temporarily, with her dog and two children, after choking on the fumes for more than a month and suffering from headaches, sore throats and nosebleeds. Even the dog was getting [diarrhea](#), she said.

With hotels in the area full over the holidays, the family members found themselves at a hotel in Pasadena, about 30 miles away, unsure where they would end up or what schools the children would attend, given that the ones in Porter Ranch have closed because of the problem.

“It’s like a fog in your brain — it feels like you’re having a stroke,” Ms. Mousavi-Dormani said of how she feels every time she returns to her home, as she did recently to help prepare for the heavy rainstorms that fell in the region last weekend as a consequence of El Niño. “Every time I go back, I get sicker and sicker.”

Many who have stayed have taken to wearing surgical masks when they garden to keep out the rotten-egg smell and the oily mist that sometimes leaves brown residue on their cars.

In some gated communities near the gas field, half the homes now sit empty, prompting fears of burglaries. Temporary signs dot the street urging residents to report suspicious activities.

“The neighborhood was a safe place to have your kids grow up,” said Amber Visage, 27, explaining why she moved to Porter Ranch with her daughter, now 6. She has relocated to a hotel and is worried about the value of her home, along with her family’s health.

“Who would want to move here now?” she asked.

The Southern California Gas Company, a division of Sempra Energy of San Diego, has been subsidizing those residents who want to move and installing air filtration for those who choose to stay.

Officials from the company declined to say how much has been spent addressing the leak or how they plan to address the lawsuits that will probably haunt them for years. At least two law firms representing residents have filed suit against the company, as has the Los Angeles city attorney.

Shares of Sempra have fallen 8.6 percent since the leak was discovered. Mr. Brown’s sister, Kathleen L. Brown, is a Sempra Energy board member.

Company officials insisted they were doing everything possible to plug the leak quickly, adding that leading engineers from around the country had been brought in to assist. A relief well under construction to fix the problem will have to reach more than 8,000 feet underground so engineers can inject additional liquids and then permanently cap the leaking well with cement, company officials said.

“We’re working literally 24 hours a day,” said Dennis Arriola, the president of Southern California Gas Company. “People get frustrated if they don’t understand the principles, but we’re going on schedule.”

He added that experts had “never seen anything like this.”

Unlike some other wells, the leaking well did not have an subsurface safety valve.

Though not required by state regulators, such a valve could have stopped the leak quickly, and calls for reform have followed.

In his emergency declaration, Mr. Brown said he was ordering an investigation into the cause of the leak, as well as stepping up regulations for all gas storage facilities in the state.