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A Possible Root Cause for the ACSF Natural Gas Leak that began on 23 October 2015?

I was surprised to learn in this 04 January 2011 article that the SoCalGas compressor upgrade project was also designed to increase the storage capacity of the Aliso Canyon Storage Field (ACSF). Stressed or corrosion-weakened well casings are suspected of failure of well SS-25 on 23 October 2015. Note the attached tabulation of field or tubing pressure by date shows no clear pattern other than higher pressures are measured in the fall, which is expected for the operation of this natural gas storage field. Note the SS-25 well failed in the fall. This article also noted the apparent role of the downed SoCalGas electric power lines in the 2008 Sesnon Fire. (The matter was still being litigated when this article was published.) The current huge ACSF natural gas leak and (likely) the 2008 Sesnon Fire are significant externalities imposed by California's reliance on natural gas as its primary energy source.

The draft version of the 2015 IEPR should be revised prior to 10 February 2016 to place greater emphasis on the abundant emission-free reasonably-priced electric power generated by Diablo Canyon Power Plant as California seeks to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. DCPP avoids about 13 million metric tonnes (MMTs) of CO2 annually.

In fact, the most cost-effective way to compensate for the increase in California's GHG emissions caused by the ACSF natural gas leak would be to devote the modest cost necessary to bring San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS) back online. One year's operation of SONGS would also avoid the production of about 13 MMTs of Carbon Dioxide. Since the estimated total CO2 emissions for the ACSF natural gas leak are currently equivalent to about 7 MMTs, per the EDF analysis, about 1/2 year of SONGS operation would equal the current carbon burden of the ACSF natural gas leak. SONGS operation would continue to provide significant carbon avoidances during each year it was producing power again.

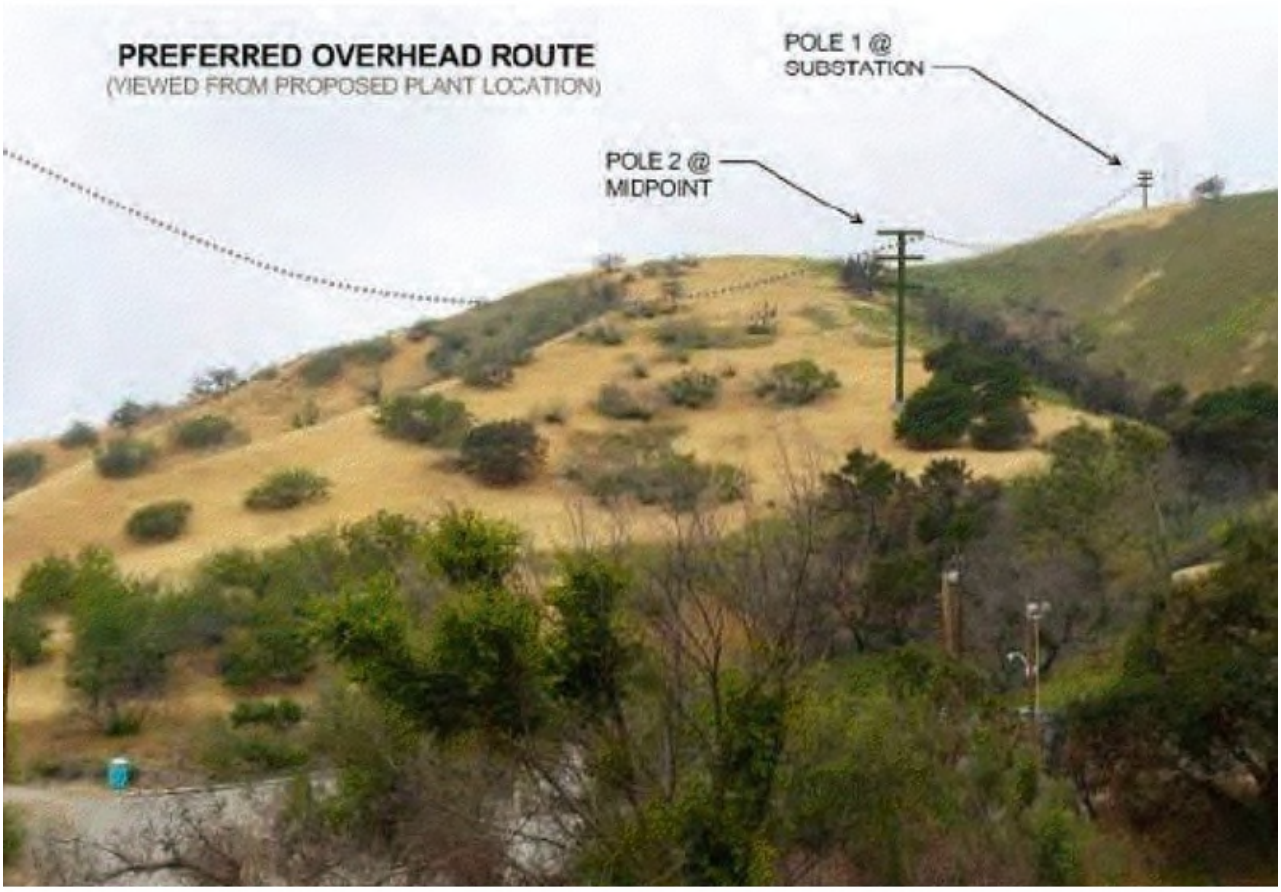
Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Northridge-Chatsworth Patch

Gas Co. Project Stirs Fears of Another Sesnon Wildfire

$200-million upgrade designed to increase gas storage capacity in the hills north of Chatsworth requires more power lines. A downed line was blamed for the 2008 blaze that scorched more than 14,000 acres.
Northridge-Chatsworth, CA

By John Gallant (Open Post) January 4, 2011
http://patch.com/california/northridge/gas-co-project-stirs-fears-of-another-sesnon-wildfire




NEWHALL SUBSTATION
Santa Clarita
CHATSWORTH TAP
SUNSHINE CANYON LANDFILL
SANTA SUSANA MOUNTAINS
ALISO CANYON STORAGE FIELD
CENTRAL COMPRESSOR STATION
Los Angeles
NATURAL SUBSTATION AND SUBTRANSMISSION LINE
Map Location
Legend
Aliso Canyon Storage Field
Existing SCE Substation
Sunshine Canyon Landfill
0
4,000
8,000
Feet
Aliso Canyon PEA
Figure 1
Street Level
AECOM
Project: 06205-134
Date: September 2009

A proposed upgrade at the 3,600-acre natural gas storage field in the hills north of Chatsworth is drawing criticism from some residents who fear a repeat of the 2008 Sesnon fire.

The Public Utilities Commission will host a presentation on the issue and take comments 6:30 p.m., Thursday, at Porter Valley Country Club, 19216 Singing Hills Drive, Northridge.

The $200-million upgrade, designed to increase storage capacity at the Southern California Gas Co. property, would require running a second set of power lines into the facility. It was a downed line from the first set of power lines that was identified as the cause of the 14,703-acre blaze that swept through Chatsworth and Porter Ranch, destroying more than 80 buildings and taking a life two years ago.

Porter Ranch resident Wes Rogers said he wants the California Public Utilities Commission to ensure the project will include stricter safety measures, including clearing brush along the power line route. In meetings this week in Northridge and Newhall, the PUC will take public input before deciding on how stringent an environmental review the project should undergo.

The gas company has said that the environmental effects would be minimal and that the improvements are needed to ensure adequate gas supplies to its 6 million area customers.

But Rogers, who saw flames come up to his fence in 2008, said the company has not addressed wildfire concerns and "would not prefer to make the Sesnon fire part of this process."

"I'm saying you are doubling the number of power lines running through the area and increasing the chance of fire by 100 percent. "

In addition to filing an official protest with the PUC, Rogers has urged the Neighborhood Councils of Porter Ranch, Chatsworth and Granada Hills North to take a position on the project.

Holding 80 million cubic feet of natural gas, the Aliso Canyon storage field is the company's largest in Southern California and one of the largest in the country. It opened in 1974 on a depleted oilfield that had been in operation since the 1930s north of what is now Sesnon Boulevard and Tampa Avenue.

Today, natural gas is piped from producers in the Rocky Mountains and Southwest to Aliso Canyon, where three natural-gas-driven compressors inject it into the sandstone layers 8,500 feet below. The gas is purchased and injected in the summer when prices are lower and released to customers in the winter, when prices are higher.

The gas turbines are the original and are based on 1960s-era jet aircraft engine technology, the company said in its PUC application. Parts are hard to find and repairs costly, company officials say. Frequent breakdowns reduce the ability to inject adequate winter supplies during the summer. The company proposes replacing the gas turbines with more efficient electric-driven compressors, which would require running a second set of Southern California Edison power lines to the area.

The storage field was a benign presence in the northern hills until October 13, 2008 when fierce Santa Ana winds brought down a Southern California Gas Co. power line in Limekiln Canyon. According to fire officials, the line fell in a brush-clogged drainage ditch, sparking a blaze that raged across the neighborhoods of Chatsworth and Porter Ranch.

Southern California Gas is in litigation over the fire and cannot comment on whether its line was responsible, said company spokeswoman Denise King.

Rogers said the homeowners' main problem with the Aliso Canyon upgrade is that while the PUC requires electric utilities such as Southern California Edison to clear brush from around lines and poles, the lines at the storage field are on private gas company property and not subject to brush-clearing requirements. A mountain biker, Rogers said he has ridden to the site of the downed line and found brush has not been cleared.

King said Rogers is mistaken. "The gas company is required to meet the same standards, comply with the same rules as SoCal Edison with respect to brush clearance," she said.

Attempts to contact the PUC to clarify the policy were unsuccessful.

The project has met little or no official opposition. A spokesman for L.A. County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, who represents the area, said the PUC has jurisdiction and referred questions to the Los Angeles County Fire Department. County fire officials who were contacted were unaware of the project and referred calls to other fire offices.

In the days after the Sesnon fire, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky introduced an ordinance requiring brush clearance around power poles on private land, although it wouldn't have applied to lines between the poles, where the break occurred in 2008. Yaroslavsky spokesman Joel Bellman said he didn't know whether the policy was implemented.

The lack of response has frustrated Rogers. In his protest filed with the PUC, the homeowner noted that the company's response to wildfire danger was to say that wildfires are a natural occurrence and little can be done.

"Wildfires are going to happen but they shouldn't happen because of poor practices," he said. "If there are poor practices, let's get them cleaned up."

Rogers said he also hoped for a greater response from Chatsworth, which lost the vast majority of buildings in 2008.

"The folks who should be most up in arms over this is the Chatsworth area," he said.

The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council meets 7 p.m., tonight, at Lawrence Middle School, 10100 Variel Ave., the day before the PUC meeting. President Judith Daniels said those attending would be reminded about the PUC briefing.

California massive methane leak by numbers

Last updated on 06/01/2016, 12:36 pm
http://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/01/06/california-massive-methane-leak-by-numbers/

A bust SoCal well in Aliso Canyon is spewing natural gas into the air, in the biggest point source of pollution in the state

Aerial view of the blown out natural gas well, Aliso Canyon (Pic: Flickr/Earthworks)

By Megan Darby

California has some of the most ambitious climate change policies in the US.

Suffering a four-year drought and record wildfires linked to rising temperatures, it is going all out to cut emissions 40% from 1990 levels by 2030.

Yet the state's efforts are being undermined by one of the worst ever natural gas leaks, from a blown out SoCal well in Aliso Canyon.

Hundreds of nearby residents have been evacuated and health complaints have soared, prompting 1,000 people to sue the company.

The rupture was detected on 23 October and is not expected to be controlled until February. Meanwhile, it is the biggest point source of global warming in the state, spewing out methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

At time of writing, the Environmental Defense Fund estimated nearly 80,000 tonnes of methane had escaped. That is worth more than US$12 million and has a warming impact equivalent to 7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. See the real time counter below.

Those figures are equivalent to:

- Two and a half times California's entire fugitive emissions (leaks) from oil and gas extraction in 2013
- Running 1.5 million typical US cars for a year
- Seven years worth of carbon captured and stored at flagship 115MW Boundary Dam coal plant in Canada
- Six months of CO2 savings from UK wind turbines

Date	Field or Tubing Pressure PSI	Bottom Pressure PSI	Tubing to Bottom Pressure Difference
11/7/1991	2,460		
9/16/1993	2,540		
9/21/1994	2,540		
11/5/1997	2,520		
11/6/1998	2,680		
8/7/2001	2,400		
7/27/2004	2,340		
8/10/2005	2,637		
7/25/2006	2,336		
7/25/2006	2,339	2,844	505
8/10/2006	2,637	3,197	560
10/5/2009	2,490		
5/29/2012	2,572		
10/2/2013	2,628		
10/21/2014	2,561		