

PORTER RANCH
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Meeting #3

Thursday, January 7, 2016
Cal State University Northridge

DRAFT NOTES
First Posted: 1/7/16 at 11:50pm
Last Updated: 1/8/10:30pm

Paula Cracium, Chair, calls the meeting to order at 6:06.

Members in Attendance:

Paula Cracium
Jarrod DeGonia
Vivian Ekchian
Craig Forry
Rana Ghadban
Tom Johnson
John Lee
Issam Najm
Matt Pakucko
Jane Stanton
Andre Van der Valk

Guests Presenters:

CA Air Resources Board:

Jorn Herner, PhD: Chief, Climate Change Mitigation and Emissions Branch,
Research Division

CA State Department of Conservation:

Jason Marshall, Chief Deputy Director
Bruce Hesson
Scott McGurk

SoCalGas:

Gillian Wright: Vice President of Customer Services, Customer Assistance
Officer (Aliso)
Jimmy Cho: Senior Vice President, Gas Operations & System Integrity

Jorn Herner presented information related to their long-term effects of the leak related to emissions. They have been flying flights to collect data.

Green House Gas Update:

In late October, the leak was releasing 50K kilograms of methane/hour is being released. The rate is declining: on 12/23, it was 30K kilograms methane/hour.

2million metric tons of CO2 equivalent has been released.

SoCalGas did write a letter to acknowledging they would mitigate emissions through other reductions, but the Governor directed ARB to create a mitigation plan which will be released by end of March to explain how.

ARB provides information to the extent at which the natural gas is entering into the community. They have to methane monitors in the homes of residents that measure once per second. Then, they take an hourly average and post it to the website every hour.

A summary of findings revealed that the data from two monitors is spotty. Ambient levels of methane is 2parts per million (ppm), and measurements some time can be seen at 2.5ppm or 3ppm near a methane source. SocCalGas has measurements of up to 200ppm at the well leak site. In the two homes, the maximum seen is 25ppm.

Every now and then, it does go up. One site stays mostly at 2ppm, but the other shows spikes up to 20ppm during the day. These two monitors may not be enough to get a complete picture, so ARB is working to tap into the two monitoring trailers AQMD has parked in the community (Porter Ranch School and Highlands Community Center). ARB is working to get AQMD data pushed to the ARB site to share that data. These monitors just monitor methane.

To measure benzene is more complicated.

First, you have to take a sample in a bottle and then take the bottle to a lab – it take a couple days to process. Currently, when methane measurements are more than 20ppm at the AQMD trailer, it automatically measures a flask of air. But it will take about a week to see results posted. They are collecting 24-hour samples every three days.

ARB is working on getting real-time benzene data, but he's not sure if it can be done.

Issam: Is the ratio of benzene/mercaptan to methane the same no matter where it blows? Can levels be used as a stand in?

Answer: Sometimes, the benzene is higher in concentration. There are many sources of benzene in the community, from cars, lawnmowers, etc., so it's hard to tell the source. They also asked SoCalGas to get a sample right next to the well, and the measurement was in percent not ppm. The benzene/methane level was what was expected.

Issam: Can ARB add a feature to the website that add that information about benzene?

A: We can work on it.

He explained that chronic levels of benzene is above 120ppm. They have a permanent measurement site in Burbank where annual average is 0.4ppm. Methane would have to be more than 20ppm.

Andre: Could some of the pollutants come from crude?

A: Not a lot expected. Dr. Don Blake from UCI took samples, and one he found smells like oily tar, but that didn't change the ratio of methane to benzene.

Air Cleaners

Mercaptans require special air filters, and ARB staff developed a list on their site. SoCalGas has an order for 11K of these filters, but they require assembly and tested. He also said that activated charcoals alone don't do enough.

How often would filters need to be replace? How many hours of use?

A: He will get back to the committee. Paula asked that this information be placed on their website. He believes it to be several months at least.

Matt: Can measurements at 1 test per second be done for other things in the air?

A: No, other constituents have to be collected and tested in a lab. Results could take weeks to develop. They are working at getting an hourly number, if they can get equipment to the field.

Issam: Has there been any effort to scan what else is in [the plume]?

A: The full suite of tests are being run.

He continued that flask sample results are in PDF form with long lists of numbers, so analysis is difficult to do. Data would need to be in a database to be able to look at averages, trends, etc. ARB has been provided data from Excel.

Issam: Can it be shared?

A: I will work to see it happen.

Results are ongoing, and within a few weeks, it should be posted.

Jarrold made a general comment about mitigation measures: they want to see fines from AQMD be independent from State requests?

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Jason Marshall introduced himself and indicated he and his colleagues would share a brief history of why the Aliso Canyon Storage Facility is there and the response of DOGGR to the leak.

He indicated that Bruce Hesson and Scott McGurk, who were present, and two of their colleagues are rotated onsite on a daily basis for consistency and continuity.

Additionally, Conservation has regular communications between agencies on a twice-daily basis, at least, on coordination calls. He also introduced Dan Bout from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services -- he'll be coordinating State response.

Bruce then shared the history of the site:

He distributed a handout of topography and wells, as well as the relief wells. He then explained the details of the geology related to gas cap, which is approximately 300 feet thick. He talked about the porousness and said it produced from 1938-1972 (over 22millbarrels of oil). From 1972 on, wells and site were converted for natural gas storage. He explained how wells were converted. He spoke of storage capacity and cushion gas, as well as monitoring activities on a regular basis.

He indicated that any work on wells had to first be filed with a notice of intent and work program, and a permit is issued by DOGGR, with inspectors/engineers onsite 24/7.

Scott then spoke about the chronology of their involvement. DOGGR was notified when gas came up away from the well on. *[They will provide the timeline they shared.]*

Jason explained that SoCalGas is using heavier materials as time goes on as the pressure is reduced, but each attempt causes erosion and potential damage can be done to the well. Further attempts to do top down closure may create more damage.

The relief well will drill down beyond the cap rock; the target for interception is below the cap rock inside the well.

They then clarified a few points related to the storage field. First, the reservoir is not a "cavern" -- it would look like solid rock, but about 25% or so is empty, porous space. There was no indication of subsidence during oil extraction, which is when such subsidence would occur. Oat Mountain has no gas storage.

John Lee: Regarding a second relief well, is it just a back-up?

A: DOGGR asked SoCalGas to do it as an "insurance policy" -- relief well #1 is on schedule and working as expected right now.

Issam: Help us understand where the permit is in this process? Did the permit fail?

A: Permits were issued many years ago, but they still require annual inspection for leaks. Well repair is a process, that must take into account the complexity of the well. There is a suite of actions that an operator would take to control a well. This particular well may take 4 months to control, but all wells are constructed uniquely.

Issam: What would change in how you define the inspection of a well and what measures need to be in place?

A: Part of the Governor's proclamation will make emergency changes that will change the way inspection, pressure, pipe protections, and shut-offs valves are required.

Craig: Was safety valve removed?

A: It wasn't believed to be removed, but it was inoperative since 1972. It was not required here, though.

Craig: Why is SoCalGas allowed to use old wells?

A: Governors order prohibits using wells that are not deemed competent to function to the standards now outlined. The wells must be inspected that to ensure that they are safe to continue operations.

Paula: When are you coming up with a list of what the new requirements will be for wells?

A: We'll be working quickly to address safety. They will provide that information as soon as they can transparently.

Paula: Can you identify the number of wells at that age and where they are?

A: We can verify the information from SoCalGas.

Matt: What's the current testing?

A: The current test is to see whether there is a leak currently. Future testing could look at certain facets related to integrity and function.

Regarding safety valves, they're only required when the well site is less than 300 feet from a residence. A subsurface safety valve is not the only solution to stopping a leaking well. Jason then went on to describe various safety options in addition to a subsurface safety valve.

Jane: Is there any chance of explosion?

A: "Explosion" is not the concern, but ignition (like a Bunsen burner). This is why there is such care being taken.

He indicated that safety of his team is a concern, and that OSHA has been onsite and has not indicated that ventilators are needed for workers there.

Matt: Can you make the UIC project file available on your website?

A: They are in the Ventura office; and we'll get them up as soon as we can.

SoCalGas Update

Jimmy Cho updated that the rains have delayed the 2nd relief well pad, but the rig has been identified and will be coming this weekend (piece by piece). Relief well #1 is at about 6K drill depth. With every run, they test to see if it's near the existing well. He then described how they will kill the well with mud and cement. The schedule submitted to DOGGR is for that to happen in late February. Rain isn't as much of an issue for delay as much as wind. SS25 has about 60 to 80 foot long (oblong) and 20 feet deep trench around the well, which secured (tied down) to be stabilized.

They're focusing efforts on gas capture (application has submitted to AQMD) and are proposing to bring in self-contained burning (not flaring it in the open) or mercaptan capture. They need to make sure they don't have air inside. Equipment has been sourced, and they're waiting for permit approval from AQMD and hope to have the capture in place by the end of the month.

They're also focusing on filtering: 8inch thick filter screens will be installed over the leaking well site. Within the next week, the filters will be in place so that on windy days, there is not mist blown out into the community.

He then reviewed pressure as it related to "water driving," where pressure reductions allows for liquid to flow into the space and come up with the gas. This is causing some of the oily midst noticed in the community.

As they look to the future, new wells -- based on geology and pad availability -- can be drilled with directional drilling and therefore, be located farther away from the community.

He indicated service reliability is a priority. As an example, on a cold day, 1.5 billion cubic feet of gas can come from pipelines, but 2.5 billion cubic feet has to come for storage. The storage in the pipeline system alone is not enough to supply the high demands. But, public concerns are going to be addressed because there is so much attention from regulatory agencies, elected officials, etc. Injection won't begin again until it's safe and approved by the regulators. The gas in Aliso serves LA/Orange County area and flows from east to west (low end of the flow), and it can't be sent back or "away."

Regarding the ODEX solution to eliminate the odor, it's deemed less effective than filters and capture, but they've not stopped testing with AQMD. Water could also be useful in reducing the odor, which is why rain has helped with the odor. SoCalGas continues to explore multiple directions and options to eliminate/reduce the odors. They will not implement ODEX without consulting and notifying the community.

Next meeting, they will present the catalogue of wells: number, age, construction, etc.

How are the needs for other communities beyond Porter Ranch being met?

Andre Van der Valk made the point (and request) that Chatsworth be included in the priority list of SoCalGas actions and regulatory mandates (including health issues), and that any tax consequences that might be considered for the Porter Ranch ZIP Code include Chatsworth, too. He also indicated that he was concerned that Porter Ranch NC didn't represent the entire area that is being impacted by the leak.

Gillian indicated that priority is for the 5-mile radius from the well site. Air purifier (enough to cover square footage of the house) or relocation is being offered within 3 days. About 10% of the requests are coming from outside of Porter Ranch: Chatsworth, Granada Hills, and Northridge, including 264 households relocated.

Relocated Families are being provided a bed for each person, based on requests from last meeting.

Issam: Are hotels blocking or rejecting people?

A: They have not heard that issue on renewals. (Issam will circle-back and get more details.)

They completed over 600 calls in the past few days to determine the status of requests (since taking the relocation intake in-house"), and they found 100 that needed relocation and those were placed today.

Related to Price Gauging, SoCalGas is setting rates of what they'll pay. With the state of emergency, the City can look into those issues and work to prevent them; and LA City EMD is looking into it.

They presented information on oily residue [To be posted when provided] with redacted personal information. They found trace amounts of crude oil. Schools were asked for deposits, but none were provided.

Regarding Business Support, individual businesses must demonstrate that the impact is caused by the leak. John Lee updated that CM Englander directed LA City's Office of Finance to start conversations with the Franchise Tax Board about tax relief, and that is taking place. There is no requirement that compels SoCalGas to pay claims.

Jarrod asked that the County Assessor provide an update in few weeks.

Meeting Process was discussed, and the meeting was ended at 8:56pm.

