



BRAD SHERMAN
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

January 6, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

I ask for your leadership in declaring a state of emergency regarding the leaking well at Southern California Gas Co.'s ("SoCalGas") storage facility above Porter Ranch. I am deeply concerned about this leak, which has been called the Clean Air Act's version of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The leak is releasing methane at a rate estimated at 110,000 pounds per hour. The noxious gas emanating from the leaking well has been sickening residents of the Porter Ranch neighborhood of Los Angeles, causing headaches, nose bleeds and dizziness. More than 2,000 Porter Ranch residents have been forced to relocate, with 3,000 additional residents in the process of being relocated. The relief well, which is intended to intercept and kill the leaking well at some 8,000 feet below the ground, will not be complete until late February at the earliest.

In addition to the immediate public health concerns, methane is a greenhouse gas that when released in large quantities can have a detrimental impact on the environment. Los Angeles's effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are being compromised right now because of the massive leak — the equivalent of 7 million additional cars on the road every day.

I appreciate that you visited the Aliso Canyon facility earlier this week and that the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management has approved a declaration of local disaster. However, more action is needed. As you know, the Governor has the power to issue a state of emergency when there exists "conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the state caused by such conditions as air pollution . . ." See California Code Section 8558, 8625. A state of emergency grants the Governor broad authority to, among other things, promulgate, issue and enforce orders as he deems necessary (California Code Section 8627) and direct state agencies to prevent and alleviate actual and threatened damage due to the emergency (California Code Section 8628).

I believe that this leak meets the requirements for declaring a state of emergency. Specifically, this leak has already placed the safety of people and property in "extreme peril" – residents have been forced to evacuate, they have been facing significant health ramifications from the leak, and the leak itself is a major fire and safety risk. While SoCalGas should continue to foot the bill for

the costs associated with the leak, a state of emergency would provide you with the requisite authority to direct stopping the leak in the quickest and most efficient manner. The leak necessitates that you acquire additional authority bestowed by a state of emergency to investigate the cause of the leak, propose action to mitigate the threat to public health, expedite the leak's repair, provide additional air monitoring, and ensure that incidents like this do not happen again.

If you declare a state of emergency, you will have the authority to order SoCalGas to deplete the remaining gas in the reservoir as quickly as possible. Please see the attached letter I sent yesterday, which explains why such action is necessary. Essentially, SoCalGas is removing the gas only as quickly as they can sell it. Instead, the gas needs to be extracted as quickly as possible, even if SoCalGas does not have buyers.

For the above reasons, I ask that you declare a state of emergency with regard to the SoCalGas leak above Porter Ranch. Thank you for your leadership and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress