



Department of Conservation

Information about the Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Leak

Updated on Friday, December 11

Overview

- The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) has established an incident command structure to coordinate local, state and federal actions to bolster the Gas Company efforts to stop the leak and ensure public safety. This effort includes operating a physical incident command post on-site at Aliso Canyon that is staffed by the Southern California Gas Company 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
- CalOES is also coordinating information sharing among governmental agencies to ensure governmental actions are well-coordinated and publicly transparent. It is maintaining a public website with updated information regarding agency actions that can be found [here](#).
- Boots & Coots, an internationally renowned specialized contractor with expertise in responding to oil and gas well concerns, was brought in by SCG to stop the leak. Its mission is to seal the leaking well permanently.
- The leak is not at the wellhead. It appears to be caused by damage to the well casing at about 500 feet underground. The damaged portion of the well is very difficult to access and cannot yet be seen with a camera.
- To date, SCG and Boots & Coots has made seven separate attempts to directly plug the well that have not yet been successful. Currently, two relief wells are being drilled to intersect the existing well bore below the leak. SCG plans to pump cement through the relief well to stop the flow of natural gas from the well.
- To ensure the protection of public health and safety, state and local agencies are conducting tests and monitoring the well site, as well as monitoring air quality at the well site, throughout the Aliso Canyon facility, and in the closest residential community to the Aliso Canyon facility.
- Work to stop the leak must proceed cautiously because of the combustible nature of the gas that is leaking and the amount of gas involved. Maintaining worker and community safety is the highest priority as efforts to stop the leak continue. Wind and weather are important factors that must be addressed in all efforts to stop the leak. Work cannot proceed when weather or conditions of the gas leak create a high safety risk.

What the Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources is doing

- The Division is a part of a team of state and local agencies that are working together on a daily basis to ensure public and environmental health during this incident.
- The Supervisor has assigned a team of experienced technical experts to direct oversight at Aliso Canyon. These experts have been on-site during all operations and are evaluating every step with SCG to determine the most effective way to permanently plug the well. They critically oversee all plans and actions at the site, including monitoring the wellhead and inspecting the well bore, and every new step to stop the leak.
- Analysts in the Division closely reviewed the annual testing history of the well. No prior leak was observed based on the logs.
- The Supervisor has convened a panel of technical experts from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the Sandia National Laboratory to provide independent expertise to assist the Division in monitoring and evaluating SCG's actions.
- On November 18, the Supervisor issued an emergency order to ensure no delay exists while standard methodologies are exhausted before more definitive solutions can be developed, including the drilling of relief wells below the leak to stop the flow of natural gas. The Emergency Order was issued to ensure that SCG is planning and implementing all feasible pathways to stop the leak. The order was also issued to require SCG to provide written plans for all feasible pathways to stop the leak, from directly sealing the leak to additional pathways including the drilling of relief wells. SCG is currently complying with the Emergency Order.
- On December 10 the Supervisor issued a second emergency order to SCG. That order requests additional testing and well data, daily briefings, and a schedule for identified pathways to seal the well.
- The Division has also initiated an investigation to determine the cause of the gas leak and whether any violations have occurred. It is coordinating with the California Public Utilities Commission, which is conducting its own investigation of the gas leak under the Commission's legal authorities.