



Department of Conservation

**Porter Ranch Community Meeting
Wednesday, December 2, 6:00 p.m.
Statement of Dr. Bohlen
State Oil and Gas Supervisor**

The Division oversees the drilling, operation, maintenance, and plugging and abandonment of oil, natural gas, and geothermal wells. Our regulatory program emphasizes the safe development of oil, natural gas, and geothermal resources in the state through sound engineering practices that protect the environment, prevent pollution, and ensure public safety.

First and foremost, as the state's Oil and Gas Supervisor, I want to convey that public safety, community concerns, and limiting the environmental footprint of this leak are our top priorities.

The Division is also a part of a team of state and local agencies that are working together to ensure public and environmental health. That includes the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Our role in regulating gas in California is to permit and inspect wells, so at the Aliso site we are in charge of overseeing SoCalGas' actions to stop the leak at the well and make sure no further risks arise.

Our job is to make sure SoCalGas solves this problem as quickly, but also as safely as possible.

Every day we are critically evaluating all action plans and actions at the site, including monitoring actions at the wellhead, inspecting the well bore, thoroughly assessing all actions and progress to shut the well. We permit and authorize their work.

When SoCalGas detected the leak and notified our office, I immediately ordered Division engineers to the site to assess the situation. I designated staff to be on-site during all working hours, including the Thanksgiving weekend. I have put my best engineers and inspectors on this assignment and will keep them there until this situation is resolved.

This is a unique and complicated situation. There is no silver bullet or quick fix. SoCal Gas has already attempted methods that are typically used to quickly stop gas leaks without success.

When we saw that standard practices did not appear to be working, we issued an order to SoCal Gas requesting all testing results and technical information to date. That order also directed the company to provide us with a written Plan B to drill a relief well if efforts to plug the leak failed.

My staff and I were not willing to sit by and wait while standard methodologies were exhausted before a more definitive solution was developed. We wanted to make sure SoCal Gas and their contractors were thinking about next steps and didn't lose any more time on logistics and planning for the relief well, so I ordered transparent, proactive planning with strong state oversight.

The company is complying with that order and has initiated a relief well. We are actively collecting information, reviewing all of the documentation and will initiate a root cause analysis to determine the cause of the leak.

This analysis will help us prevent future events such as this from occurring again and determine if SoCal Gas violated state laws or regulations in the maintenance and operation of this well.

I want to emphasize that it is in everyone's best interest to stop this leak quickly, including SoCal Gas. The plan is to seal this well forever. At the same time, it is important to be cautious because of the gas itself, and to not make any moves that could potentially make the situation worse.

Worker and community safety are tantamount. Wind and weather are important factors. Work cannot proceed on high risk days.

It is taking a long time, but there is no shortcut when it comes to safety.

The best contractors in the world are on site tackling this problem. They are doing everything they can to plug the leak, but the fact is it may take a second well – a relief well – to reach below the leak and plug it from there.

Drilling a relief well safely will take time, but the Division, along with the Air Board, LA Public Health and Office of Emergency Services will continue to oversee all activities and safeguard this community.

I am hearing you, that the people in this community are concerned. I understand that concern and that you need more information, and to know government regulators are

on your side. We are on your side and we will continue to make safeguarding your health and your community our priority.

SoCalGas has a lot of work to do and the Division is here to ensure that work is done.