



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

News Release

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STATE SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON EARLY DRAFT OF PERMANENT NATURAL GAS STORAGE REGULATIONS

SACRAMENTO – In order to ensure the safe operation of natural gas storage facilities in California, the Department of Conservation (DOC) today released preliminary draft regulations that update existing standards for natural gas storage wells. These new permanent rules introduce several new requirements for gas storage wells and, once adopted, will replace emergency rules currently in place to ensure safe operation of gas storage facilities.

The preliminary or “[discussion draft](#)” regulations provide an opportunity for public comment prior to the formal rulemaking process, and will be refined into formal draft regulations to be considered through the state’s formal process for adopting new regulations. These permanent regulations will replace strict [emergency regulations](#) adopted in February by the Department that required — among other new safety features — daily checks for leaks at every well in each of the state’s gas storage facilities. The Governor ordered the DOC to enact emergency regulations in his [Proclamation of Emergency](#) in response to a major leak at the Aliso Canyon natural gas storage facility in Los Angeles County.

Members of the public and stakeholders are invited to comment on this preliminary draft through 5 p.m. August 22, 2016. Two public workshops – hosted by the DOC – will be held in August, in Los Angeles and Sacramento.

“This preliminary draft of regulations updates construction and operating standards of gas storage wells, introduces new data and monitoring requirements for storage facilities, and ensures adequate risk management and emergency response plans at each storage facility,” State Oil & Gas Supervisor Ken Harris said. “Our emphasis is to ensure public safety and environmental protection during the operation of these facilities.”

Among the highlights of the pre-rulemaking draft regulations:

- ◆ Continue to require a daily inspection of gas storage well heads using gas leak detection technology such as infrared imaging.

The Department of Conservation’s mission is to balance today’s needs with tomorrow’s challenges and foster intelligent, sustainable, and efficient use of California’s energy, land, and mineral resources.

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◆ Stringent well construction standards, including considerations and requirements relating to tubing and packer and sub-surface safety valves on all wells.

◆ More frequent testing, including casing wall thickness inspections and pressure tests at least every two years to ensure well integrity.

◆ Detailed risk management plans covering a wide variety of issues, including well fires and blowouts, hazardous material spills, explosions, natural disasters, geologic hazards such as earthquakes, and emergency response.

The first public workshop will be held 1-5 p.m. Tuesday, August 9, at the Natural Resources Building auditorium, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento.

The second workshop will be held 1-5 p.m. Thursday, August 11, at the Hilton Woodland Hills, 6360 Canoga Avenue, Woodland Hills.

The public also can submit comments about the discussion draft regulations via mail, FAX or email:

Mail: Department of Conservation, 801 K Street, MS 24-02, Sacramento, CA 95814, Attention: Gas Storage Discussion Draft.

Fax: (916) 324-0948.

E-mail: DOGGR_GasStorageRegs@conservation.ca.gov.

Following the public comment period, the preliminary draft regulations will be updated and a formal rulemaking process will commence later this summer or in early fall. Accordingly, another public comment period and public hearings will be held.

California has 14 underground natural gas storage projects in 12 fields with a capacity of 385.4 billion cubic feet of natural gas. There are about 350 active wells associated with those fields.

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