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October 30, 2018

Commissioners Picker, Peterman, Randolph, Guzman Aceves, and Rechtschaffen
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California 94102

Dear Commissioners:¹

As you well know, the Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council (PRNC), which is an elected body of representatives of the community of Porter Ranch, has been working closely with the PUC staff on the matter of the Aliso Canyon gas storage and processing facility after the disastrous rupture of well SS-25 in October 2015. We continue to be gravely concerned about the health and safety of our community, and we continue to call for the expedited and responsible closure of the Aliso Canyon Facility as called for by Governor Brown. However, recent revelations about the facility have so further outraged us that we wish to bring the matter directly to your attention.

This year, the Aliso Canyon facility requires renewal of its Title V permit from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), and the draft permit was issued by the SCAQMD for public review and comment.² The permit describes all the equipment used at the facility and their contents, and we were surprised to find references to crude oil tanks. When we inquired about the reason for storing crude oil at the site, SCAQMD staff informed us that the facility does not use crude oil, but rather produces it. Specifically, since the gas storage reservoir is an abandoned oil reservoir, sufficient amounts of crude oil are pulled out with the gas that SoCalGas actively implements specific treatment systems to remove the crude oil from the gas before it is served into the system.

The above revelation means that SoCalGas clearly knew that the 100,000 metric tons of gas that were discharged uncontrollably from the field between October 23, 2015 through February 12, 2016 contained crude oil that was not removed from the gas but rather settled on and in our homes, schools, parks, and everywhere else. Yet, throughout the entire four months, SoCalGas intentionally withheld this information from the public and insisted that there were no long-term health effects for the people because the gas only contained methane and mercaptans, and methane is non-toxic, while the mercaptans are only irritants with minor short-term health effects. AT NO TIME during this entire event did SoCalGas tell the people of Porter Ranch and the North San Fernando Valley that the gas being spread over our community contained crude oil, when they knew exactly that it did because they otherwise have to remove it from the gas before they are allowed to use it. If this is not the epitome of corporate deception, we don't know what is!

¹ This letter represents the opinion of the PRNC, and not necessarily that of the City of Los Angeles.

² <http://www3.aqmd.gov/webapp1/publicnotices2/Search.aspx?&DateFrom=7/25/2018&DateTo=10/25/2018&CompanyId=800128>

Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council

This is not a game of numbers and gas supply and demand. We are sure that none of you would tolerate having your children be sprayed with crude oil for four months while being lied to in the face about the content of that spray. Crude oil contains a laundry list of life-threatening chemicals with disastrous long-term health effects, including various forms of cancer. How can that be acceptable to anyone? What happens the next time a gas well ruptures? What will you tell the people who will be showered with crude oil again?

As commissioners, you have the awesome responsibility of overseeing the operation and conduct of all privately-held utilities in the State. We submit to you that you also have the moral authority – indeed the moral responsibility – to protect the lives of the people of California from the fraudulent and harmful conduct of the very utilities you oversee. This deceitful omission by SoCalGas should outrage you as much as it outrages us, and it should not stand. This company became the entity it is now because of the people of Southern California. Yet, it does not hesitate to deceive them for its own profits.

The disaster of Aliso Canyon is not behind us and its effects will linger for decades to come. It is time for the Commission to right this wrong. SoCalGas should not get away with what they have done. We urge you to take action now; adopt the Governor's directive and set in motion the process to shut down the Aliso Canyon facility sooner rather than later. You have the authority to modify the scope of I.17-02-002 and focus it on developing and implementing the steps needed to achieve the goal of closing down this facility.

We respectfully ask that you provide us with a written response to our request as soon as possible, but we hope that you will be on the right side of history and do the right thing by a community that did not ask for any of this, yet continues to pay the high price for all of it.

Respectfully Yours,
Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council



Issam Najm, Ph.D., P.E.
President

cc: Mr. Henry Stern, California State Senator, District 27
Mr. Robert Hertzberg, California State Senator, District 18
Mr. Dante Acosta, California Assemblymember, District 38
Mr. Jesse Gabriel, California Assemblymember, District 45
Mr. Brad Sherman, United States Representative, California 30th District
Dr. Robert Weisenmiller, Chair, California Energy Commission
Ms. Mary Nichols, Chair, California Air Resources Board
Ms. Kathryn Barger, Los Angeles County Supervisor
Mr. Angelo Bellomo, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Mr. Wayne Nastro, Executive Director, South Coast Air Quality Management District
Mr. Mitchell Englander, Los Angeles City Councilman
Mr. Eric Garcetti, Mayor, City of Los Angeles