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ENGLANDER CALLS FOR COUNCIL HEARING ON THE ALISO CANYON GAS LEAK

LOS ANGELES — Councilmember Mitchell Englander today called for The Southern California Gas Company to appear before the Los Angeles City Council to answer questions related to their handling of a gas leak at their Aliso Canyon Natural Gas Storage Facility in the Los Angeles County Unincorporated Area that has plagued the adjacent Porter Ranch community since its occurrence on October 23.

Since that date, there has been a strong gas odor and illnesses that can be expected due to exposure to mercaptans, the odorant added to natural gas. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health issued a November 19th Directive to the Gas Company ordering them to “...repair the subject gas leak on an expedited basis...” and to “...offer free, temporary relocation to any area residents affected by odors from the Aliso Canyon site.”

Though his office has received daily updates from the Gas Company and other entities, Englander says it isn't enough. “This situation has lasted nearly a month now with no clear resolution in sight. It is critical that the community be given the most current and accurate information about the leak from all the entities with jurisdiction,” said Englander, “particularly when public health is affected. A public hearing is essential so that the community's concerns for their health and safety can be addressed.”

The California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources, LA City and County Fire and Hazmat, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District have regularly been on site. Although Air Quality testing is ongoing, pervasive exposure to the gas leak odor has continually caused community members to experience headaches, nose bleeds, nausea, and other symptoms. According to County Public Health, “Mercaptans...do pose a health threat to the community, including short-term neurological, gastrointestinal, and respiratory symptoms that may result from inhalation.”

While the Gas Company is actively engaged in trying to mitigate the gas leak, their own website states that their solution may take several months and incur additional noise, odor and a similar release of fluids into the air, that last week caused residents, schools and businesses to be directed to “...remain indoors until further notice”.

The So Cal Gas Storage Facility is located just outside the City of Los Angeles boundaries in the Los Angeles County Unincorporated portion of Aliso Canyon. The site is regulated by the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources and the South Coast Air Quality Management District has jurisdiction over odors and Air Quality. The LA County Department of Public Health is referring calls to their Toxics and Epidemiology division.

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