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**Ad Hoc Committee: Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility
Minutes**

Monday, July 17, 2017,

4:00 – 5:30 pm

Porter Ranch Branch Library

11371 Tampa, Porter Ranch, CA 91326

Introductions

Susan Gorman-Chang is the Vice President Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council (PRNC) and Co-Chair of PRNC's Sustainability Committee.

Jarrold DeGonia, Senior Field Deputy for Supervisor Kathryn Barger, has been involved since the beginning of the Porter Ranch Aliso Canyon gas well blowout, and previously represented Supervisor Michael Antonovich.

Katie Butler, Health Impact Assessment Analyst, County of Los Angeles Public Health (CLAPH) has been involved in the air monitoring and dust sampling in Porter Ranch and many other areas of health relative to this issue. Both she and Jarrod participated in the Aliso Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings (<https://vimeo.com/prcac>), which were informative to the community, but prematurely dissolved on June 16, 2017.

Andrea Polidori, Atmospheric Measurements Manager, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), has been monitoring the Aliso Canyon area air in ways such as driving the SCAQMD mobile air monitoring vehicle throughout our neighborhoods.

Procedures for Ad Hoc Committee

Susan explained this group is advisory only, and will return to the full Porter Ranch Neighborhood Council (PRNC) Board with recommendations. Our purpose is to come up with ideas for securing reliable, independent, permanent air monitoring. We wish to avoid any 'woulda-coulda-shoulda' discourse, and brainstorm for solutions going forward. We will review what has been done *for context*, but look to future solutions.

Past Monitoring

Katie first provided background of past monitoring efforts in Porter Ranch. First, UCLA came into our community and collected particulate matter in February 2016 with devises

hung in selected back yards. Then, UCLA and the County of Los Angeles Public Health (CLAPH) worked together to sample the air for 200 known chemicals in five different locations over a five-day period. They were ramping up efforts because they expected Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility to reopen in the fall of 2016.

Due to the community experiencing ongoing health issues and symptoms, CLAPH then conducted indoor air sampling and surface testing of 100 homes. They also sampled ten “control homes” which were five miles away. They found an increased proportion of metals in the homes in our community, and furthermore, the chemical fingerprint of these metals matched those metals found at the well blowout site. The CLADH determined that the presence of this type of dust in homes could cause irritation and health symptoms, and it was at this point that the CLADH ordered SoCalGas to pay for cleaning the interior of homes.

Jarrold stated that the crux of the County lawsuit against SoCalGas is the evidence gathered from these air monitoring and dust wipe samples. The types of metals and dust found were consistent among the drill mud, down-wind samples, and samples inside homes.

SoCalGas filed a writ against the CLADH, asserting the CLADH does not have the authority to compel SoCalGas to pay for cleaning up these homes. SoCalGas ended up cleaning only a subset of homes in our community.

The County is also in a lawsuit against the Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) in which County is demanding that the following be conducted before Aliso Canyon Gas Storage Facility is allowed to reopen:

- a. Environmental Impact Report (EIR) per the California Environmental Quality Act (C.E.Q.A.)
- b. Seismic Study

A community member shared that it is interesting to note that they heard that DOGGR themselves hired UC Berkley to do an analysis of the area, and UC Berkeley recommended a full seismic study.

Jarrold stated that there is a geologist in Ventura, Dr. Tom Davis, applied for a grant from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to pay him to conduct a seismic study of Aliso Canyon. Jarrold stated the County is sending the USGS a letter asking that this grant be allocated to this individual.

Katie explained that UCLA and UC Berkley are studying the particulate measurement data collected in Porter Ranch by Diane Gonzales. Diane’s equipment was borrowed from CARB, and had to be returned in February before fire season, since CARB deploys this equipment in the aftermath of fires. Dr. Jarrett, UCLA, saw a pattern of fine particulate matter in the data collected from Porter Ranch and the data is quite complex. Katie is working with UCLA on this data and it is still being reviewed. Individuals from Cambridge and UC Berkley have looked at the data as well as Suzanne Paulsen, a well-known

consultant in the field. A draft report has been written and is going through the peer review process. It was suggested that when the report is finalized, perhaps someone from UCLA can present it to PRNC.

Katie was asked if LACDH had tested water in residential pools, and Katie said yes, they had. They found levels of all metals to be below levels considered safe for drinking water. However, they only sampled 10 pools. It is interesting that the pool water contained the same type of metals they found in the indoor dust samples.

The “oily dots” residue, found on exterior house walls and play equipment, was also tested and was comprised of heavy hydrocarbons found in crude oil, but did not contain VOC (volatile organic compounds).

SCAQMD Monitoring

Andrea explained that SCAQMD has had four fixed monitoring stations gathering data for the past 21 months. Locations are:

- 1) Highlands at Porter Ranch pool parking lot
- 2) Castlebay Lane Elementary School
- 3) Porter Ranch Community School
- 4) Reseda*

*Note the Reseda station is permanent and located at 18330 Gault Street, Reseda, 91702 just south of Sherman Way. It is not located in Porter Ranch.

Lane asked how many complaints SCAQMD had before SS#25 well was capped and Andrea said 2,341. Lane has how many after that, and Andrea will get back to us with that number.

SCAQMD is finalizing their report on this data that has been collected over 21 months and will issue an Executive Summary on the findings of the air monitoring stations. They tested for methane, and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) including benzenes, toluene, xylene, as well as formaldehyde. They will be **removing Stations 1, 2 and 3** (from Highlands, Castlebay Lane Elementary and Porter Ranch Community School) **this week**. Andrea stressed that the stations can be redeployed if needed in the future.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) also had monitoring stations here in Porter Ranch, but they were taken out months ago.

Jarrold said he would bring back to Kathryn Barger the fact that SoCalGas monitors and the independent Argo Scientific monitor will, after this week, be the only monitors up here in Porter Ranch. **That is important information.**

Susan then brought up our community’s issue with the SoCalGas monitors: :

- First, they are only required to be in place for three years. Jarrod explained that the three years is due to the fact that this was a settlement from a criminal case brought against SoCalGas by the District Attorney of the County of Los Angeles.
- Second, SoCalGas monitors reports methane levels consistently as a flat line at either 0 or 2 ppm. A measurement of 0 ppm is impossible on planet Earth, as there is always some methane present from organic sources. SoCalGas subsequently explained that a 0 reading means that particular monitor (there are 8 total) is down for maintenance. A flat line reading of 2 is also problematic and unrealistic. Argo Scientific measurements, taken every five minutes, and seen on Smart Phones in real time, vary, going up and down, which is normal on planet Earth.

A resident brought up the example of a suspicious incident during the Crimson leak on May 27, 2017 which showed a spike in the Argo Scientific fence line methane levels, while SoCalGas Monitor #5 & #7 mysteriously “went down”, showing a reading of 0. Screen shots from both Argo Scientific readings and SoCalGas reading show that this occurred.

Fox Guarding the Hen House

We discussed how it is never a good idea for an entity to monitor *itself* – and be in control of that monitoring process – and its reported data. That is a classic “fox guarding the hen house” and never works due to an inherent lack of objectivity and built-in bias. Susan asked Andrea if SCAQMD data looked more like Argo’s variable readings or more like SoCalGas’s flat line of 0 or 2. Andre answered it looks more like Argo’s variable readings.

Susan stated that it seems Argo’s data is easier to read than AQMD’s because AQMD’s graph online has the y axis points too close together. Andrea explained that SCAQMD has continuous monitoring, but only reports out the one hour average. Andrea explained that the SCAQMD mobile vehicle measures the air once a second and can be driven pretty much anywhere on streets.

SoCalGas’s explanation as to why they flat line at 2.0 is as follows:

“The California Air Resources Board has identified that 1.9 – 2 parts per million (ppm) is the normal background level of methane for the Porter Ranch Area. As such, we can expect that the normal level is what would be detected most of the time. Essentially, a flat line at 2 ppm means that the monitors do not detect any methane above normal background levels. You can compare our readings with those from the South Coast Air Quality Management District’s monitor, which is available here. Please keep in mind that this monitor uses a different technology than ours, so the readings may vary”

To summarize, we as a community do not trust SoCalGas’s methane monitoring as they seem to be manipulating the data before we can even see it.

Susan brought up the example of Los Angeles Harbor, where the Harbor is charged with conducting and reporting out its own air quality monitoring. Susan learned (from a presentation at Neighborhood Council Sustainability Alliance over the weekend) that their

monitors sometimes show negative, which is impossible when monitoring for air contaminants and may even indicate that their instruments have been purposefully calibrated to show lower levels of contamination than what is actually occurring.

Katie & Jarrod both agreed that best case scenario would be independent, third party air monitoring for Porter Ranch.

A community resident stated that not long ago they were at the Islands restaurant in Porter Ranch and smelled gas. They called 1-800-CUT-SMOG, and an AQMD agent showed up 1 hour later, and by that time the gas smell was gone, so no incident report could be made because due to SCAQMD protocol if the agent does not smell gas, this is not considered an incident.

Jarrod, who needed to leave a bit early, asked which is the community's highest priority?

1. Funding of Health Study that will cost between \$45-\$50 million
2. Permanent independent third party air monitoring
3. Preservation of Hidden Creek

Susan stated we are advisory only as an Ad Hoc Committee and would bring that question back to the full PRNC Board. Jarrod shared with us that Senator Acosta brought forth a bill for a \$2 million Health Study to be conducted for those affected by the gas well blowout in Aliso Canyon, but that sadly it did not pass so it will not become law.

Rules 1180 for Refineries

Susan brought up SCAQMD Rule 1180 which is underway and will create mandatory fence line monitoring around all refineries. Andrea explained that this was necessary because the refineries were doing their own monitoring, but when SCAQMD went to investigate the reliability of that data, they found that the actual VOC readings were three-to-two times higher than refineries were reporting. So SCAQMD started the process of Rule 1180.

This is yet another example of why it is a bad idea to allow the entity that needs to be monitored, in charge of their own monitoring process and in control of the data they are reporting out to the public because this is an intrinsic conflict of interest.

Rule 1148.3

Susan asked Andrea to check on when the next Workshop for Rule 1148.3, regulations for underground gas storage facilities, will take place. It is supposed to be this summer. Can we perhaps ask that permanent, independent fence line type monitoring be added to the ideas in this Rule 1148.3?

DOGGR

The comment period for DOGGR for safety measures at underground storage facilities has closed. They did not bring up fence line type monitoring as a safety measure. They now have 15 days to finalize.

Health Symptoms/Argo Scientific data/Next Door Porter Ranch

Susan asked if anyone is comparing complaints called in to CLADH to Argo Scientific Data to Next Door Porter Ranch posts to see if there is correlation between spikes in methane and smelling of mercaptan (odorant added to gas) to health complaints. Katie answered she has tried to do this, but it is difficult to tie symptoms log to Argo data which reports out every five minutes. People often report symptoms after the fact, and are not too specific as to exactly what time symptoms occurred. Also, a community member pointed out that sometimes symptoms often build over a period of time. Susan suggested maybe we can do a community training about the importance of recording the exact time of health symptoms and range of the buildup of health symptoms. Maybe we can even come up with a standard sheet for people to jot down their location, symptoms and check off date and time.

Katie was asked about the cancer cluster at Castlebay Lane Charter Elementary school. Katie explained that there is a State Cancer Registry that registers all cancers in California. The CLADH can perform an Environmental Investigation. Doing this by zip code to obtain results can be challenging. As of yet, they have not found a cancer cluster at Castlebay Lane Elementary School, however, Katie asked us to find out specifically what kind of cancer each teacher had/has and bring that information back to her. (Susan, Maureen & Craig will work on finding this out and getting the information to Katie).

Susan asked if there are any specific cancers caused by benzene, for example, like the way asbestos exposure causes mesothelioma. Katie answered that no, there is not any link thus far to any of the exposures we are talking about being linked to any one specific cancer. Asbestos exposure is directly related to mesothelioma, Katie reiterated, and we don't seem yet to have such a strong link for other exposures to other specific cancers. Also, cancers and exposures are complicated by how we live our lives such as where we work, the commute to and from work, etc. There are so many factors.

Susan asked if there are increased incidents of asthma in Porter Ranch, and Katie had not looked into that, but she could.

Brainstorming Ideas

For air monitoring, we would like:

- Independent party doing the monitoring & reporting
- Seen on our Smart Phones in real time (as we do with Argo fenceline)
- Monitoring for:
 - Methane, VOC, H₂S (hydrogen sulfide), sulfur compounds, formaldehyde

The community members stated that they trust Argo Scientific.

FLIR cameras, available to be viewed online, would be good, too.

Grant Opportunities

Andrea stated there are grant opportunities that may help us fund permanent fence line type air monitoring. One is an EPA Star Grant. This consists of deploying many low cost sensors that can monitor particulate matter, ozone, CO, NO, and VOC but they do not measure methane.

Andrea also brought up the possibility of another mobile monitor that can be deployed in a car at a cost of \$40,000. Susan suggested that if that were deployed up here in Porter Ranch and someone smelled mercaptan (odorant added to gas) then the monitor could be deployed much quicker than waiting for an AQMD person to drive in from Sherman Oaks or Diamond Bar. Susan, brainstorming, suggested using Waivecar technology to allow trained people to unlock the mobile air monitoring vehicle, using their Smart Phones, and a trained person(s) could then drive the mobile monitor vehicle (stationed in Porter Ranch) to the said location where gas is being smelled and then the air quality can be measured.

JPL Flyovers

Katie mentioned that JPL was doing flyovers and measuring compounds in the air. She will check and see if they are still doing this and what data they have compiled.

Homework/Follow Up

Each person will research/look into the bulleted items after their name.

Andrea

- SCAQMD Final Report and Executive Summary on air quality monitoring data
- EPA Star Grants for low costs air monitoring sensors
- Additional mobile monitor car -\$40,000
- Permanent fence line type monitoring option (like Argo)
- Total number of complaints of gas smell after SS-25 well was plugged
- Date of the next Rule 1148.3 (Regulations for underground gas storage facilities) Workshop

Katie

- Final report from UCLA on particulate matter
- Status of JPL Flyovers and their report if any

- Increased asthma in Porter Ranch?

Susan

- What is community's highest priority?
- List of specific cancer types that teachers have at Castlebay Lane Elementary

Susan will send out email for potential next meeting dates, since Jarrod had to leave and we all have to check our calendars. Looks like it will be early September for the next meeting.