



August 17, 2023

President Alice Reynolds
 Commissioner Karen Douglas
 Commissioner John Reynolds
 Commissioner Darcie Houck
 Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma

California Public Utilities Commission

505 Van Ness Avenue
 San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Deny petition from Southern California Gas Company on increasing gas storage limits on Aliso Canyon

Dear President Reynolds and Commissioners,

We are writing in solidarity with the Los Angeles residents who are still suffering in the aftermath of the largest methane gas blowout in United States history and urge you to reject the application from Southern California Gas Company (SoCalGas) to increase storage limits on

Aliso Canyon. Instead, the California Public Utilities Commission must prioritize shutting down Aliso Canyon as directed by Governor Newsom.

When Governor Newsom took office, he ordered the CPUC to expedite the closure of Aliso Canyon faster than Governor Brown's proposed closure date of 2027. Governor Newsom has previously clarified to the CPUC that the state's policy is to close Aliso Canyon and provided funding to do an independent study for closure pathways.

SoCalGas's claim that increasing the maximum allowable gas inventory would mitigate against future price hikes is categorically false. The gas utility price hikes last winter were a result of SoCalGas failing to properly manage their record high storage level while taking advantage of the lack of public oversight of energy markets. SoCalGas cannot be trusted to act in good faith to protect their ratepayers. Increasing storage at Aliso Canyon is intended to further enrich SoCalGas and their parent company Sempra, not to reduce rates.

Sempra's profits have been rising, thanks in large part to their subsidiary SoCalGas. Last year SoCalGas's Quarter 4 earnings were \$260 million, a \$62 million increase from the previous year. In Quarter 1 of this year SoCalGas's earnings were \$360 million, a \$100 million increase from the last quarter. While SoCalGas continues to make record-breaking profits, low-income ratepayers who are already burdened with rising inflation are forced to decide between their utilities and paying rent, groceries, and other monthly necessities. At a time where Governor Newsom has requested the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to open up an investigation into potential price gouging practices by California's energy market actors, it would be unconscionable for the CPUC to allow gas storage limit increases at a SoCalGas facility.

Aliso Canyon is not needed to meet our energy needs. After the gas blowout, the state adopted 31 mitigation measures to readjust the gas system and electric grid to operate smoothly without Aliso Canyon for nearly two years. These mitigation efforts were successful and demonstrated how the facility was not needed to maintain energy reliability. For two years after the gas blowout, Aliso Canyon was under strict regulations and withdrawals were not permitted unless in the case of an emergency. During that time, the Southern California region did not face blackouts or gas supply shortages as a result of Aliso Canyon being offline.

The facility poses significant danger to the health and safety of Los Angeles residents. It took SoCalGas four months to officially seal the blowout after it was discovered in October 2015. Since the Aliso Canyon gas blowout ended in February 2016, there have been multiple reported leaks and spills at the facility by SoCalGas to state regulators which threaten public health and the environment. According to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 63% of residents surveyed reported health symptoms after the blowout was capped.

When withdrawals and activities at Aliso Canyon were ramped up, residents near the facility have reported strong odors and an uptick in symptoms in the community. According to SoCalGas testimony, the facility leaks up to two times a day. Since SoCalGas resumed operations at the field after the gas blowout, numerous leaks and violations have occurred. In July of 2017, when the CPUC allowed for injection, and higher pressure, to begin again, within two weeks a full 33% of their wells failed and had to be shut down again. Now they want to increase pressure even more. This increased danger at a proven unstable facility is not acceptable.

We urge the CPUC to protect the safety of Los Angeles residents by rejecting any attempts by SoCalGas to increase storage limits at Aliso Canyon and expedite the closure of the facility.

Sincerely,

1000 Grandmothers for Future Generations
350 Bay Area
350 Conejo / San Fernando Valley
350 Ventura County Climate Hub
Aliso Moms Alliance
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
American Indian Movement Southern California
Ballona Wetlands Institute
California Climate Voters
CEJA
Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice
Center on Race, Poverty & the Environment
Central California Asthma Collaborative
Citizens' Climate Lobby - LA West Chapter
Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG)
Climate Hawks Vote
Communities For A Better Environment
Consumer Watchdog
Defend Ballona Wetlands
East Valley Indivisibles
Environmental Working Group
Food & Water Watch
Fossil Free California
Indivisible Ventura
Manos Unidas
Oil and Gas Action Network

Pacific Environment
Patagonia
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles
Presente.org
Progressive Democrats of America
Progressives for Democracy in America
Protect Playa Now
Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples
San Fernando Valley Climate Reality
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility
SanDiego350
Santa Barbara Standing Rock Coalition
Save Porter Ranch
SEE (Social Eco Education)
Sierra Club
Sierra Club CA
SoCal350 San Fernando Valley Hub
Stand.earth
Sunflower Alliance
SURJ VC
System Change Not Climate Change
The Climate Center
The NELA Climate Collective
The River Project
Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods (VISION)