



Documents Show Hydraulic Fracturing Used in Proximity of Leaking Well

LOS ANGELES— Fracking is commonly used in Aliso Canyon gas storage wells and has occurred near SS-25, the leaking well spewing thousands of tons of methane into Los Angeles neighborhoods, according to official state documents.

“Gov. Jerry Brown needs to immediately halt fracking in gas storage facilities throughout California,” said Maya Golden-Krasner, an L.A.-based attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. “Fracking for gas storage poses a huge threat to well integrity and public safety, especially when it’s done in the old and corroding wells in Aliso Canyon. This dangerous practice increases the risk of accidents like the massive leak that has driven thousands of L.A. residents from their homes.”

California’s new fracking law, S.B. 4, contained a little-noticed provision exempting certain types of well stimulation for gas storage. Well records show that state oil officials have not been tracking — let alone monitoring or regulating — this practice in Aliso Canyon gas storage wells, many of which are decades old.

State documents do show that a gas storage well was fracked less than half a mile from SS-25 in 2005, and the California Council on Science and Technology’s recent well-stimulation report states: “Operators hydraulically fracture gas storage wells. Hydraulic fracturing facilitates about a third of the subsurface storage of natural gas in the state.” The practice is concentrated in Aliso Canyon, according to the science council.

Fracking is used by operators to increase production of gas from storage wells. A 1999 report from the U.S. Department of Energy explains that gas storage wells are prone to continued deliverability loss at a reported average rate of 5 percent per year. “This is a result of formation damage due to the introduction of foreign materials during gas injection, scale deposition and/or fines mobilization during gas withdrawal, and even the formation and growth of bacteria,” the report explains.

“People around California have no idea that gas storage wells near their homes are being fracked,” Golden-Krasner said. “This dangerous practice is being used in their backyards while state regulators look the other way. That’s absolutely unacceptable, and it needs to stop now.”

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 990,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

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