



Hearing Board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District

PUBLIC HEARING

Frequently Asked Questions for SoCal Gas Aliso Canyon Hearing

1. **What is the Hearing Board?**

The Hearing Board is an independent administrative law panel. State law requires that the five Hearing Board members are appointed by, but act independently of, the SCAQMD Governing Board. The Hearing Board consists of an engineer, an attorney, a medical doctor and two public members. The Hearing Board is authorized to issue Orders for Abatement and decide other issues related to SCAQMD rules. The Hearing Board hears evidence from both sides of an issue and reaches a decision based on the evidence presented.

2. **What is an Order for Abatement?**

If issued, an Order for Abatement requires a company determined by the Hearing Board to be operating out of compliance with air quality rules and regulations to comply with the statute or rule being violated. The Hearing Board can order installation of air pollution control equipment or other actions. The order for abatement must be framed to require a party to refrain from a particular act and may be conditional and require the party to refrain unless certain conditions are met.

3. **Why is the SCAQMD petitioning the Hearing Board to Issue this Order for Abatement?**

SCAQMD's petition alleges that SoCal Gas is creating a public nuisance by discharging odor emissions into nearby communities, beginning on October 24, 2015 and continuing through the present, in violation of Health and Safety Code Section 41700 and District Rule 402. SoCal Gas has been unable to stop discharging air pollutant releases impacting the nearby communities and has stated publicly that it may take at least three months to mitigate the situation. SCAQMD's proposed order, if approved, will require SoCal Gas to do the following:

- Stop the leak as quickly as possible
- Capture all leaking gas as quickly as possible
- Utilize all gas from the reservoir as quickly as possible until all leaks are stopped
- Inspect and maintain all wells as quickly as possible
- Monitor all emissions from the well and reservoir
- Retain an independent third party to conduct a health study
- Mitigate greenhouse gas impacts of the leak by funding projects that restore value to the community

4. **Why is the January 9th hearing being held in the community?**

What will happen at this hearing?

Will we be informed about procedure before the hearing starts?

The hearing is being held in the community to enable members of the public to observe the hearing first hand and to provide testimony. The hearing is an administrative law proceeding similar to a judicial court. Participants will be informed about what they can and cannot do at the hearing. For example, cell phones will need to be silenced and disruptions inside the hearing room will not be allowed. Hearing Board Rule 7(m) prohibits placards, signs or posters exceeding 18-inches in height or width or which have protruding sticks or handles..

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5. *As a member of the public, will I be allowed to participate?*

Yes. Members of the public are encouraged to attend and may provide testimony related to the SoCal Gas Aliso Canyon facility.

**6. *If I choose to testify, will I have to identify myself and where I live?
Will I be put under oath?***

Will I have to answer questions from lawyers and the Hearing Board?

Will my testimony be subject to a time limit?

As in a court of law, anyone who chooses to testify will be put under oath and will need to state their name and address. Your sworn testimony will be considered evidence as long as it is related to the topic under consideration. After testifying, participants may be asked questions by lawyers and the Hearing Board. Public testimony is usually limited to three minutes per person, but this time limit may be adjusted as needed by the Chairman of the Hearing Board.

7. *Will I be allowed to ask the SCAQMD, SoCal Gas or the Hearing Board any questions during the hearing?*

The hearing is a judicial proceeding, so questions are not permitted from those who testify nor from the audience.

8. *Will I be allowed to take pictures or video during the hearing?*

Anyone may take pictures and/or video as long as it does not disrupt the hearing.

9. *Will the Hearing Board adjourn before all public testimony is taken?*

The Hearing Board will adjourn at the end of public testimony or no later than 4:00 p.m. If there is not enough time for all members of the public who wish to testify to speak, there will be subsequent opportunities to provide testimony to the Hearing Board. Written testimony also can be submitted for the official record.

10. *Will the later hearings, at which both the SCAQMD and SoCal Gas present evidence, be open to the public?*

Will public testimony be taken at those hearings, too?

Yes, the later hearings will be open to the public. If public testimony has not been concluded at the January 9, 2016 hearing, testimony will be taken at subsequent hearings from members of the public who have not previously testified. A schedule of additional hearing dates will be announced by the SCAQMD. At the conclusion of the hearings the Hearing Board will deliberate and render its decision in public.