

# EMERGENCY PERMIT

## 24EMP-00013



- Countywide:**  
Subject to the requirements of Section 35.82.090 of the Santa Barbara County Land Use & Development Code.
- Montecito:**  
Subject to the requirements of Section 35.472.080 of the Santa Barbara County Montecito Land Use & Development Code.

**Case Name:** SoCalGas Line 1005 Dig Site 4 (2024 SCCDA Program)

**Case Number:** 24EMP-00013

**Site Address:** 974 Romero Canyon Road, Santa Barbara CA 93108

**APN:** 155-030-044

**Applicant/Agent Name:** SoCalGas, 24650 Avenue Rockefeller, Valencia, CA 93115, ATTN: Wes Pollard

**Owner Name:** County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District, SoCalGas (easement)

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## **PERMIT APPROVAL:**

This is to inform you that an Emergency Permit has been approved for:

The project is the request by SoCalGas for an Emergency Permit for the inspection and repair of a pipeline anomaly on Line 1005, a high-pressure gas transmission line, located at 974 Romero Canyon Road in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, known as Dig 4 (APN 155-030-044). The project is required to maintain gas service and support existing infrastructure during the 2024 – 2025 winter season. Work includes excavation, inspection, and repair requiring a temporary trench to access the pipeline entirely within the existing SoCalGas easement. Dig 4 is located approximately 230 feet upstream (northwest) of an existing stormwater detention basin owned and maintained by the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District and is located within the inland Montecito Environmentally Sensitive Habita (ESH) Overlay of Romero Creek. The repair area is on the outer edge of the riparian habitat adjacent to and upslope of the 100-year floodplain. Temporary work areas will be used to store spoil and construction materials and to facilitate pipeline inspection/repair activities. Equipment and personnel will be mobilized to the work areas via the recently repaired detention basin gate and access from Romero Canyon Road. No new access roads will be needed or constructed. No water diversion is required. The creek channel will be avoided.

The project will require up to an approximately 20-foot (ft) by 10-ft trench to a depth of up to 13 ft (up to 100 cubic yards) entirely within the existing 16.5-foot SoCalGas easement. The trench will be the minimum necessary to inspect and repair and is not expected to exceed 100 cubic yards of cut. If soils are unstable and the trench walls become compromised, then shoring, sheet piling, or another type of soil reinforcement may be required during construction. The pipe will be lifted and lowered into the trench by sideboom tractors and excavators. Padded slings will be used so the tractors can lower the pipe without damaging its protective coating. The new pipe segment will be welded to the existing line in the existing trench and hydrostatically tested in place, if necessary. Dig 4 may require the installation of stopple fittings on the existing pipeline and a temporary bypass. The bypass is required to ensure continuous natural gas supply to the north coast areas while isolating the section of pipe to be inspected and repaired/replaced. Backfilling the trench involves replacing the excavated subsoil in the trench and re-spreading the stockpiled topsoil to return the surface to its original grade. Native material excavated from the pipeline trench will be used to backfill the trench. If rock conditions are encountered during trench excavation, the trench bottom will first be padded with a layer of imported, rock-free sand. After the work has been completed, the temporary work area will be de-compacted to pre-project conditions, if necessary, and the project area will be restored to as near-pre-construction contours as feasible. Impacted trees, root masses, and/or sprigs will also be re-buried to the extent feasible to support natural regeneration from on-site sources. The proposed restoration consists of restoring existing contours and applying a native seed mix after project completion and re-planting impacted plant material. If native or other protected trees are subject to major encroachment (more than 20 or 25 percent of root zone or canopy depending on species) or removal, SoCalGas will prepare a Tree Replacement Plan. Equipment may include backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms.

**A biological monitor will be on site daily for the duration of work in Romero Creek. The biological monitor will prepare daily monitoring reports, conduct daily pre-construction surveys for wildlife and nesting birds, inspect BMPs, and monitor for the presence of protected and special-status species. When not in use and at the end of the workday, all open trenches and excavations should be sufficiently covered (i.e., no gaps or holes) or protected with exclusionary fencing to prevent wildlife entrapment and ramped so that animals can escape. The biological monitor will inspect all open trenches daily and before trenches or excavations are backfilled for trapped animals. If any worker discovers that wildlife has become trapped, work activities will halt and the biological monitor will be notified immediately. The monitor will ensure exclusionary ESH and protected tree fencing remains in place. Worker education will be conducted and will include an orientation procedure for all persons who work on site. The program will consist of a presentation from a person knowledgeable about the biology of special-status species and sensitive resources occurring in the study area. The orientation program will include a discussion of the biology of special-status species, their habitat needs, their status, and appropriate management measures. A fact sheet containing this information will be prepared and distributed. Upon completion of the orientation, employees will sign a form stating they attended the program and understand all protection measures. Biological best practices will be employed throughout the project and activities will be conducted in a manner that minimizes impacts to flora and fauna. The biological best practices include using pre-existing travel routes, maintaining general housekeeping, wildlife avoidance, inspecting excavations, and covering/elevating the ends of pipe segments, among other recommendations. When not in use and at the end of the workday, excavations should be sufficiently protected to prevent wildlife entrapment. Adherence to stormwater BMPs from the SoCalGas Best Management Practices Manual for Water Quality and Stormwater Management, dated March 2024 will be implemented prior to and during construction to avoid indirect impacts to offsite, downstream waters or wetlands. This also includes secondary containment and equipment maintenance outside a 100-foot buffer from wetlands/waters. Work will also adhere to the Clean Water Act U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board approvals and conditions of approval under Regional General Permits No. 63.**

**After project completion, SoCalGas will submit reports to Planning and Development detailing any protected trees removed or subject to major (more than 20 percent) canopy and/or root zone encroachment. One western sycamore tree (*Platanus racemosa*) is anticipated to be relocated or removed. Canopy trimming of one coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) is proposed to accommodate equipment. The following tree protection measures will be implemented.**

- **Equipment for excavation will be maneuvered to the extent feasible to avoid the need for canopy trimming.**
- **All protected trees will be preserved, protected, and maintained to the extent feasible.**
- **The use of herbicides or fertilizer will be prohibited in the drip line of any oak tree.**
- **All protected trees within 25 ft of the work area will be fenced at the edge of the work area, driveway, or six (6) ft outside the dripline for protection as feasible.**
- **A qualified Arborist and/or qualified biological monitor will be present during any excavation beneath the driplines of protected trees. All excavation in the driplines of the trees shall be minimized and shall be done with hand tools where feasible.**
- **Any protected tree root pruning and canopy trimming will be done under the direction of a qualified Arborist and/or qualified biological monitor.**

- **No heavy equipment, storage of materials or parking will take place under the dripline, or within five (5) ft of the dripline, of any protected tree(s).**

The project constitutes an emergency because the pipeline pressure in Line 1005 must be reduced due to the stress, corrosion, and cracking indications. Line 1005 cannot return to full operating pressure until the repairs are completed, and lower operating pressure cannot support customers. Additionally, work activities have the potential to impact waterways and ESH. As such, the timeframe to permit this work as a “standard” project would have resulted in reduced gas availability which was projected to result in curtailment of non-core customers and if demand was high enough, possible loss of gas to core customers. As such, the project is required immediately to avoid the disruption of essential public services and to maintain public safety and system reliability.

The Director has determined this situation constitutes an emergency in accordance with the applicable Development Code indicated above and immediate action is warranted. As the required findings (listed below) can be made, the emergency work is hereby approved, subject to compliance with the attached conditions of approval. The project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(c), which exempts “specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency” (see Attachment B). This permit is not valid until signed by the owner/applicant and subsequently issued by the Department upon verification that all conditions of approval requiring action prior to permit issuance are satisfied.



2/13/26

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Lisa Plowman, Director

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Date

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**OWNER/APPLICANT AGREEMENT:**

The undersigned permittee acknowledges receipt of this permit and agrees to abide by all terms and conditions of approval incorporated herein. The undersigned also acknowledges and agrees that:

- This Emergency Permit provides only temporary authorization for the proposed action and other applicable permits (such as a Conditional Use Permit, Coastal Development Permit, Land Use Permit, Building Permit) are required by law to validate the emergency work as permanent.
- Any evidence or findings contained herein, or upon which this permit relies, shall not constitute any limitation on the authority of the County to issue, grant, deny, rescind, or revoke this permit or any future permit(s) required for the activities described herein, or on the authority of the County to analyze, mitigate, or condition any future permit(s) required for the activities described herein.
- This permit does not authorize any work or construction activities outside of the scope of the project as indicated in the project description, conditions of approval and approved plans.
- This permit shall not be construed to authorize any violation of County ordinance or policy, or the violation of any State or Federal regulation.

Thaesha Jacobson

Print Name

*Thaesha L Jacobson*

Signature

03/04/2026

Date

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**PERMIT ISSUANCE:**

Jacquelynn Ybarra

Planner Name

Signature

03/05/2026

Date

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## **BACKGROUND:**

The SoCalGas North Coastal System infrastructure has been impacted by heavy rainstorms, resulting in landslide and erosion events along mountainous terrain in Central and Southern California, including Santa Barbara County. SoCalGas anticipated that the North Coastal System would be compromised for the 2024 – 2025 winter season due to the area being prone to flooding and landslides, and with only a single high-pressure transmission pipeline operating between Ventura and the La Goleta Storage Facility during peak demand. In response, SoCalGas activated its Emergency Operations Center to maintain the safety of both the infrastructure and gas availability to the public. The SoCalGas Pipeline Integrity Management Engineering Group determined that there were several emergency inspection and repair/replacement locations along the natural gas transmission pipeline, identified as Line 160 and Line 1005 (L160/1005), between the Goleta Storage Field in Santa Barbara County and Highway 33 in Ventura County. SoCalGas identified ten anomalies along the pipeline system. The subject of 24EMP-00013 is one of these ten anomalies, identified as Dig 4, located at 974 Romero Canyon Road within an existing stormwater detention basin owned and maintained by the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District.

SoCalGas first filed an application for an Emergency Permit with Planning and Development for Dig Site 4 on October 8, 2024. Work at Dig 4 commenced following the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District's repair of the stormwater detention basin, as previous access to the area was impassable due to the damage caused by the winter storms of 2023/2024. Detention basin maintenance began August 1, 2024 and included access repair, sediment removal and relocation, and active channel relocation. Dig Site 4 work began in October 2024 and all Line 1005 work was completed by January 10, 2025. Temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters at Dig 4 included 0.16 acres of non-wetland riparian habitat, 0.19 acres of CDFW waters of the State, and 295-feet of waters of the U.S. Impacts occurred along mostly unvegetated, rocky, and compacted terrace within an existing stormwater detention basin. One sycamore tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) was removed during construction.

Standard construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) were installed during project activities and were maintained in good working order. These primarily included silt fence, fiber rolls, and rumble strips at access points. Final restoration activities within all jurisdictional areas and adjacent upland laydown areas were done in accordance with the requirements of SoCalGas' Regional General Permit (RGP) 63. This included soil stabilization (compaction to pre-project conditions) and broadcast or hydroseeding with a native erosion control seed mix. Native seed mix was hand broadcast within the excavation area and adjacent slope above Romero Creek. General protection measures included:

- Temporary impact areas were minimized to the extent feasible. Areas of disturbed soils with slopes towards the drainage feature were stabilized to reduce erosion potential. Appropriate BMPs (silt fence and/or fiber rolls) were used to stabilize the site during and after construction. All disturbed areas received native erosion control hydroseed.
- No material was stockpiled within jurisdictional areas.
- Project construction occurred during daylight hours only.
- All trash was properly contained and removed from the work site daily. All excess materials and debris were removed from the work area after project completion.
- Staging/storage areas for equipment were located outside jurisdictional areas.
- All refueling and equipment maintenance was located a minimum of 100 feet away from water bodies.

- Construction equipment and vehicles were checked daily and maintained as needed to prevent leaks. Stationary equipment such as motors, pumps, generators, and welders, located within or adjacent to the drainage were positioned over drip pans and were inspected frequently.
- No equipment maintenance was completed where petroleum products or other pollutants from the equipment could enter the drainage.
- Where needed, tree trimming was kept to the minimum feasible amount and was conducted under the direction of the qualified biological monitor and consistent with local permit tree protection measures.

Special-status species and sensitive resource protection measures included:

- Qualified biologists conducted general pre-construction surveys for wildlife immediately prior to initiation of Project activities. Supplemental pre-construction surveys were conducted prior to Project activities initiated each morning and throughout the day by the onsite biologist.
- Prior to initiation of construction activities, the onsite biologist provided a preconstruction meeting/briefing to all the contractors and subcontractors that described the potential biological resources associated with the project area, and the required avoidance and minimization measures.
- A qualified biologist was on-site daily for the entirety of project activities to assist in the implementation of permit requirements.
- A qualified biologist conducted focused pre-construction surveys for California red-legged frog (CRLF; *Rana draytonii*) and steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*; Southern California Distinct Population Segment) within suitable habitat areas, including a minimum 50-foot buffer immediately prior to construction to ensure no individuals were present in upland habitat or within the drainage feature(s). No CRLF, steelhead, or other special status species (other than common foraging raptors) were detected during preconstruction surveys or during project activities.
- Where suitable habitat was present, CRLF exclusionary fencing (e.g., silt fence) was installed to discourage wildlife from entering laydown areas and the workspace. The onsite monitor oversaw installation of exclusionary fencing and inspected it daily to ensure fencing remained in place. Escape ramps or covers were secured over open excavations overnight to deter wildlife from inadvertently becoming entrapped.
- Dig 4 is located immediately adjacent to mapped steelhead Critical Habitat, and activities did not result in any direct or indirect impacts.

## **FINDINGS OF APPROVAL:**

- 1. The approval of this project shall not be held to permit or to be an approval of a violation of any provision of any County Ordinance or State Law.**

The approval of this Emergency Permit will not permit or approve any violation of County Ordinance or State Law. Montecito Land Use and Development Code Section 35.472.090.G requires that an application for the required permits necessary to validate the emergency work as permanent be submitted by the applicant no later than 30 days following the issuance of the Emergency Permit. The Applicant will apply for the appropriate follow-on land use permit, and

Planning and Development will process the standard permit to ensure that the project is reviewed for, and completed in compliance with, all applicable regulations.

2. **In compliance with Subsection 35.472.090.E.2 of the Montecito Land Use and Development Code, prior to the approval or conditional approval of an application for an Emergency Permit the Director shall first make all of the following findings:**

**a. *An emergency exists and requires action more quickly than provided for by the customary procedures for permit processing.***

SoCalGas' North Coastal System infrastructure was impacted by heavy rainstorms, resulting in landslide and erosion events, compromising the public utility system. The infrastructure consists of a single high-pressure transmission line, that if shut-in, could have left customers without gas during the 2024 – 2025 winter season. Dig 4 is one of 10 anomalies identified on the pipeline system, and work is required to be completed as soon as possible to avoid service interruption and maintain infrastructure integrity. As such, the timeframe to permit this work as a "standard" project would have resulted in reduced gas availability, projected to result in curtailment of gas to core and non-core customers. Gas service is an essential public service that is especially crucial during the winter season when thermal heating demands are high. Further, if anomalies are not addressed in a timely manner and if the pipeline's integrity were to fail for any reason, natural gas would be released into the environment and SoCal Gas' ability to safely manage a potential pipeline leak would be significantly compromised. Therefore, the Director finds that an emergency exists and requires action more quickly than provided for by the customary procedures for standard permit processing.

**b. *The action proposed is consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Montecito Community Plan and the requirements of this Development Code.***

The County's Comprehensive Plan includes policies which aim to protect, maintain and restore the environment, including both the natural and man-made environments. Emergency action taken by SoCal Gas is allowed under the Montecito Land Use & Development Code, which recognizes that certain actions warrant immediate, special consideration to lessen or remediate an emergency. The emergency action is consistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan and the Montecito Community Plan, as described below with reference to applicable policies:

*MCP Policy BIO-M-1.1: Designate and provide protection to important or sensitive environmental resources and habitats in the inland portion of the Montecito Planning Area.*

*MCP Policy BIO-M-1.2: The following biological resources and habitats shall be identified as environmentally sensitive and shall be protected and preserved to the extent feasible through the Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH) overlay: riparian woodland corridors, Monarch butterfly roosts, Sensitive native flora, and Coastal sage scrub.*

*MCP Policy BIO-M-1.3: Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH) areas within the Montecito Planning Area shall be protected, and where appropriate, enhanced.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.6: Riparian vegetation shall be protected as part of a stream or creek buffer. Where riparian vegetation has previously been removed, (except for channel cleaning*

*necessary for free-flowing conditions as determined by the County Flood Control District) the buffer shall allow the reestablishment of riparian vegetation to its prior extent to the greatest degree possible. Restoration of degraded riparian areas to their former state shall be encouraged.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.7: No structures shall be located within a riparian corridor except: public trails that would not adversely affect existing habitat; dams necessary for water supply projects; flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the floodplain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety, other development where the primary function is for the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat and where this policy would preclude reasonable development of a parcel. Culverts, fences, pipelines, and bridges (when support structures are located outside the critical habitat) may be permitted when no alternative route/location is feasible. All development shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible to minimize the impact to the greatest extent.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.15: To the maximum extent feasible, specimen trees shall be preserved. Specimen trees are defined for the purpose of this policy as mature trees that are healthy and structurally sound and have grown into the natural stature particular to the species. Native or non-native trees that have unusual scenic or aesthetic quality, have important historic value, or are unique due to species type or location shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.16: All existing native trees regardless of size that have biological value shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.20: Pollution of streams, sloughs, drainage channels, underground water basins, estuaries, the ocean and areas adjacent to such waters shall be minimized.*

*Policy BIO-M-1.23: Where sensitive plant species and sensitive animal species are found pursuant to the review of a discretionary project, efforts shall be made to preserve the habitat in which they are located to the maximum extent feasible. For the purposes of this policy sensitive plant species are those species which appear on a list in the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Sensitive animal species are defined as those animal species identified by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or are listed in Tate's The Audubon Blue List (birds).*

*Policy GEO-M-1.2: Grading from future ministerial and discretionary projects in Montecito shall be minimized to the extent feasible in order to prevent unsightly scars in the natural topography due to grading, and to minimize the potential for earth slippage, erosion, and other safety risks.*

**Consistent.** Dig 4 is located within the ESH Overlay of Romero Creek, on the outer edge of the riparian habitat adjacent to and upslope of the 100-year floodplain and immediately adjacent to mapped steelhead Critical Habitat. Work was conducted following repairs to the existing stormwater detention basin which reduced potential impacts to riparian habitat and jurisdictional waters. Project impacts to jurisdictional waters included 0.16 acres of non-wetland riparian habitat, 0.19 acres of CDFW waters of the State, and 295-

feet of washers of the U.S. Impacts occurred along mostly unvegetated, rocky, and compacted terrace. One sycamore tree was removed during construction. Pipeline inspection and repair activities did not result in any direct or indirect impacts to Critical Habitat. A variety of minimization and protection measures for biological resources were implemented during construction, including qualified biologists conducting pre-construction surveys for sensitive and special-status species, conducting onsite biological monitoring, setting up exclusionary fencing to discourage wildlife from entering the work area, inspecting BMPs, covering open trenches/excavations, conducting a worker environmental awareness training, using pre-existing travel routes, maintaining general housekeeping, and covering/elevating the ends of pipe segments among other recommendations. All project activities also adhered to stormwater BMPs from the SoCalGas Best Management Practices Manual for Water Quality and Stormwater Management to avoid indirect impacts to offsite, downstream waters or wetlands, and adhered to Regional General Permits No. 63 issued for the work by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board. Grading was minimized to approximately 20-ft by 10-ft x 13-ft just enough to expose the portions of pipeline necessary for inspection and repair. One native western sycamore tree was removed; however, conditions of approval of the Emergency Permit require the Applicant to prepare a Tree Replacement Plan to mitigate the impacts at a 1:1 ratio.

***c. Public comment on the proposed emergency action has been reviewed.***

Notifications of the pending Emergency Permit approval were distributed to neighboring properties and the Planning and Development's Oil and Gas Interested Parties list on July 2, 2025. The Director finds that no public comment on the proposed emergency action has been received to date.

**3. This action is not subject to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15269, statutory exemption for emergency projects.**

CEQA Guideline Section 15269(b) exempts *“Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare. Emergency repairs include those that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency”*. The project was determined to be an emergency activity to avoid the disruption of essential public services. Due to flooding and landslides, SoCalGas anticipated that the North Coastal System (Line 1005/106) would be compromised for the 2024 – 2025 winter season, and that there was a potential for service to be lost to core and non-core gas customers in Santa Barbara County. The SoCalGas Pipeline Integrity Management Engineering Group determined that Dig Site 4 required immediate inspection and repair to maintain the safety of both the pipeline infrastructure and gas availability to the public.

## **EMERGENCY PERMIT CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. This Emergency Permit is based upon and limited to compliance with the project description, and the conditions of approval set forth below. Any deviations from the project description or conditions must be reviewed and approved by the County for conformity with this approval. Deviations without the above-described approval will constitute a violation of permit approval. If it is determined that project activity is occurring in violation of any or all of the following conditions, the Director may revoke this permit and all authorization for development. The decision of the Director to revoke the Emergency Permit may be appealed to the Montecito Planning Commission.

### The project description is as follows:

An Emergency Permit for the inspection and repair of a pipeline anomaly on Line 1005, a high-pressure gas transmission line, located at 974 Romero Canyon Road in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, known as Dig 4 (APN 155-030-044). The project is required to maintain gas service and support existing infrastructure during the 2024 – 2025 winter season. Work includes excavation, inspection, and repair requiring a temporary trench to access the pipeline entirely within the existing SoCalGas easement. Dig 4 is located approximately 230 feet upstream (northwest) of an existing stormwater detention basin owned and maintained by the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District and is located within the inland Montecito Environmentally Sensitive Habita (ESH) Overlay of Romero Creek. The repair area is on the outer edge of the riparian habitat adjacent to and upslope of the 100-year floodplain. Temporary work areas will be used to store spoil and construction materials and to facilitate pipeline inspection/repair activities. Equipment and personnel will be mobilized to the work areas via the recently repaired detention basin gate and access from Romero Canyon Road. No new access roads will be needed or constructed. No water diversion is required. The creek channel will be avoided. The project will require up to an approximately 20-foot (ft) by 10-ft trench to a depth of up to 13 ft (up to 100 cubic yards) entirely within the existing 16.5-foot SoCalGas easement. The trench will be the minimum necessary to inspect and repair and is not expected to exceed 100 cubic yards of cut. If soils are unstable and the trench walls become compromised, then shoring, sheet piling, or another type of soil reinforcement may be required during construction. The pipe will be lifted and lowered into the trench by sideboom tractors and excavators. Padded slings will be used so the tractors can lower the pipe without damaging its protective coating. The new pipe segment will be welded to the existing line in the existing trench and hydrostatically tested in place, if necessary. Dig 4 may require the installation of stopple fittings on the existing pipeline and a temporary bypass. The bypass is required to ensure continuous natural gas supply to the north coast areas while isolating the section of pipe to be inspected and repaired/replaced. Backfilling the trench involves replacing the excavated subsoil in the trench and re-spreading the stockpiled topsoil to return the surface to its original grade. Native material excavated from the pipeline trench will be used to backfill the trench. If rock conditions are encountered during trench excavation, the trench bottom will first be padded with a layer of imported, rock-free sand. After the work has been completed, the temporary work area will be de-compacted to pre-project conditions, if necessary, and the project area will be restored to as near-pre-construction contours as feasible. Impacted trees, root masses, and/or sprigs will also be re-buried to the extent feasible to support natural regeneration from on-site sources. The proposed restoration consists of

restoring existing contours and applying a native seed mix after project completion and re-planting impacted plant material. If native or other protected trees are subject to major encroachment (more than 20 or 25 percent of root zone or canopy depending on species) or removal, SoCalGas will prepare a Tree Replacement Plan. Equipment may include backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms. A biological monitor will be on site daily for the duration of work in Romero Creek. The biological monitor will prepare daily monitoring reports, conduct daily pre-construction surveys for wildlife and nesting birds, inspect BMPs, and monitor for the presence of protected and special-status species. When not in use and at the end of the workday, all open trenches and excavations should be sufficiently covered (i.e., no gaps or holes) or protected with exclusionary fencing to prevent wildlife entrapment and ramped so that animals can escape. The biological monitor will inspect all open trenches daily and before trenches or excavations are backfilled for trapped animals. If any worker discovers that wildlife has become trapped, work activities will halt and the biological monitor will be notified immediately. The monitor will ensure exclusionary ESH and protected tree fencing remains in place. Worker education will be conducted and will include an orientation procedure for all persons who work on site. The program will consist of a presentation from a person knowledgeable about the biology of special-status species and sensitive resources occurring in the study area. The orientation program will include a discussion of the biology of special-status species, their habitat needs, their status, and appropriate management measures. A fact sheet containing this information will be prepared and distributed. Upon completion of the orientation, employees will sign a form stating they attended the program and understand all protection measures. Biological best practices will be employed throughout the project and activities will be conducted in a manner that minimizes impacts to flora and fauna. The biological best practices include using pre-existing travel routes, maintaining general housekeeping, wildlife avoidance, inspecting excavations, and covering/elevating the ends of pipe segments, among other recommendations. When not in use and at the end of the workday, excavations should be sufficiently protected to prevent wildlife entrapment. Adherence to stormwater BMPs from the SoCalGas Best Management Practices Manual for Water Quality and Stormwater Management, dated March 2024 will be implemented prior to and during construction to avoid indirect impacts to offsite, downstream waters or wetlands. This also includes secondary containment and equipment maintenance outside a 100-foot buffer from wetlands/waters. Work will also adhere to the Clean Water Act U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board approvals and conditions of approval under Regional General Permits No. 63. After project completion, SoCalGas will submit reports to Planning and Development detailing any protected trees removed or subject to major (more than 20 percent) canopy and/or root zone encroachment. One western sycamore tree (*Platanus racemosa*) is anticipated to be relocated or removed. Canopy trimming of one coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) is proposed to accommodate equipment. The following tree protection measures will be implemented.

- Equipment for excavation will be maneuvered to the extent feasible to avoid the need for canopy trimming.
- All protected trees will be preserved, protected, and maintained to the extent feasible.
- The use of herbicides or fertilizer will be prohibited in the drip line of any oak tree.

- All protected trees within 25 ft of the work area will be fenced at the edge of the work area, driveway, or six (6) ft outside the dripline for protection as feasible.
  - A qualified Arborist and/or qualified biological monitor will be present during any excavation beneath the driplines of protected trees. All excavation in the driplines of the trees shall be minimized and shall be done with hand tools where feasible.
  - Any protected tree root pruning and canopy trimming will be done under the direction of a qualified Arborist and/or qualified biological monitor.
  - No heavy equipment, storage of materials or parking will take place under the dripline, or within five (5) ft of the dripline, of any protected tree(s).
2. An application(s) for the required permits necessary to validate the emergency work as permanent shall be submitted by the applicant to the Department no later than 30 days following the issuance of this Emergency Permit. The permits required for the proposed emergency work include a Land Use Permit pursuant to Section 35.472.090.G of the Montecito Land Use Development Code.
  3. Any materials required for a completed application, as identified in the initial review of the original application required pursuant to Condition #2 above, shall be submitted within 90 days after written notification of the application deficiencies is provided to the applicant. This time period may be extended by the Director.
  4. Only that emergency work specifically requested and deemed an emergency for the specific property mentioned is authorized. Any additional emergency work requires separate authorization from the Director. The work authorized by this permit must be commenced within 30 days of the date of issuance of the emergency permit.
  5. This permit does not preclude the necessity to obtain authorization and/or permits from other Departments or agencies.
  6. The Director may order the work authorized under this emergency permit to stop immediately if it is determined that unanticipated and substantial adverse environmental effects may occur with continued construction.
  7. **Bio-02a Tree Replacement Plan.** The Owner/Applicant shall submit for P&D approval a Tree Replacement Plan prepared by a P&D-approved arborist/ biologist designed to mitigate for the loss of any native and/or protected trees impacted by project activities. The Plan shall include the following components:
    - a. Oak trees shall be replaced at a 10:1 ratio.
    - b. Other native trees shall be replaced at a 1:1 ratio.
    - c. Replacement trees shall be obtained from locally occurring saplings or seed stock.
    - d. Replanting locations shall be shown on plans.
    - e. Trees shall be gopher-fenced.

- f. Plan shall include the proposed planting, maintenance, and monitoring schedule.
- g. Plan shall include establishment/performance criteria.
- h. If replacement trees cannot be all accommodated onsite, the plan shall demonstrate how replacement trees will be established offsite.

**PLAN REQUIREMENTS & TIMING:** Plans shall be submitted to P&D review and approval prior to issuance of the follow-on Land Use Permit. The Owner/Applicant shall post a performance security prior to issuance of the follow-on Land Use Permit to ensure installation and maintenance for a minimum of 3 years if deemed necessary by P&D. **MONITORING:** The Owner/Applicant shall demonstrate to P&D compliance monitoring staff that all required components of the approved plan(s) are in place as required prior to release of the installation performance security. P&D compliance monitoring staff signature is required to release the installation security upon satisfactory installation of all items in approved plans and maintenance security upon successful implementation of this plan.

- 8. **Bio-03 Onsite Biologist.** The Owner/Applicant shall designate a P&D-approved biologist to be onsite throughout all grading and construction activities which may impact sensitive biological resources. Duties include the responsibility to ensure all aspects of the project description and biological Best Management Practices are carried out. **MONITORING:** The Owner/Applicant shall submit to P&D compliance monitoring staff the name and contact information for the approved biologist prior to commencement of construction. P&D compliance monitoring staff shall site inspect as appropriate.
- 9. **Bio-08 Fish and Wildlife.** No alteration to stream channels or banks shall be permitted until the Owner/Applicant demonstrates receipt of all authorizations from state and/or federal agencies for any planned alteration to stream channels or banks of Romero Creek.
- 10. **Bio-09 Fish and Wildlife Jurisdiction Advisory.** The issuance of this permit does not relieve the permit-holder of any duties, obligations, or responsibilities under the federal or California Endangered Species Act or any other law. The permit-holder shall contact the necessary jurisdictional agencies to ascertain his or her level of risk under the federal and California Endangered Species Act in implementing the project herein permitted.

Indemnity for Violation of the Endangered Species Act: The applicant shall defend, indemnify and hold harmless the County or its agents, officers and employees from any and all claims, actions, proceedings, demands, damages, costs, expenses (including attorneys fees), judgments or liabilities, against the County or its agents, offices or employees brought by any entity or person for any and all actions or omissions of the applicant or his agents, employees or other independent contractors arising out of this permit alleged to be in violation of the federal or California Endangered Species Acts (16 USC Sec. 1531 et seq.; Cal. Fish and Game Code Sec. 2050 et sec.). This permit does not authorize, approved or otherwise support a "take" of any listed species as defined under the federal or California Endangered Species Acts. Applicant shall notify County immediately of any potential violation of the federal and/or California Endangered Species Act.

11. **Bio-10 Storm Water BMPs.** To minimize pollutants impacting downstream waterbodies or habitat, the project shall be designed to minimize degradation of storm water quality. Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed in accordance with the California Stormwater BMP Handbook for New Development and Redevelopment (California Stormwater Quality Association) or other approved method shall be installed to intercept and remove pollutants prior to discharging to the storm drain system. The BMPs selected shall be maintained in working order for the life of the construction project. The Owner/Applicant is responsible for the maintenance and operation of all improvements and shall maintain appropriate records. **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:** The BMPs shall be described and detailed on all grading and drainage plans and depicted graphically. **TIMING:** The plans shall be submitted to P&D for approval prior to the follow-on Land Use Permit. **MONITORING:** P&D compliance monitoring staff shall site inspect for installation as appropriate.
  
12. **Bio-12 Habitat Restoration.** The Owner/Applicant shall submit for P&D approval a Habitat Restoration Plan prepared by a P&D-approved biologist designed to mitigate impacts from construction activities. At a minimum, the Habitat Restoration Plan shall identify the impacts to, and provide restoration of, disturbed native vegetation that occurs in the Project footprint to pre-construction conditions. The plan shall include performance criteria and monitoring requirements. If seeding or supplemental planting is required to meet the success criteria, plant species will be chosen based on the pre-construction conditions as recommended by a qualified biologist. The Habitat Restoration Plan shall include direction on the seed types, planting methods, as well as the time of year for planting. Requirements for irrigation, monitoring of plants and replacement, if needed, shall be established in the plan. Impacts to native habitat shall be mitigated at a minimum of a 3:1 ratio, and a minimum 4:1 ratio for wetland impacts. **TIMING:** Plans shall be submitted to P&D for review and approval prior to approval of the follow-on Land Use Permit. **MONITORING:** The Owner/Applicant shall demonstrate to P&D compliance monitoring staff that all required components of the approved plan(s) are in place.
  
13. **Bio-20 Equipment Storage-Construction.** The Owner/Applicant shall designate one or more construction equipment filling and storage area(s) to contain spills, facilitate clean-up and proper disposal and prevent contamination from discharging to the storm drains, street, drainage ditches, creeks, or wetlands. The areas shall be no larger than 50 x 50 foot unless otherwise approved by P&D and shall be located at least 100 feet from any storm drain, waterbody or sensitive biological resources. **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:** The Owner/Applicant shall designate the P&D approved location on all site and grading plans. **TIMING:** The Owner/Applicant shall install the area prior to commencement of construction. **MONITORING:** P&D compliance monitoring staff shall site inspect for installation as appropriate.
  
14. **CulRes-09 Stop Work at Encounter.** The Owner/Applicant and/or their agents, representatives or contractors shall stop or redirect work immediately in the event archaeological remains are encountered during construction-related activities. The Owner/Applicant shall immediately contact P&D staff, and retain a P&D approved archaeologist and Native American representative to evaluate the significance of the find in compliance with the provisions of the County Archaeological Guidelines and conduct appropriate mitigation funded by the Owner/Applicant. **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:** This condition shall be printed on all grading plans.

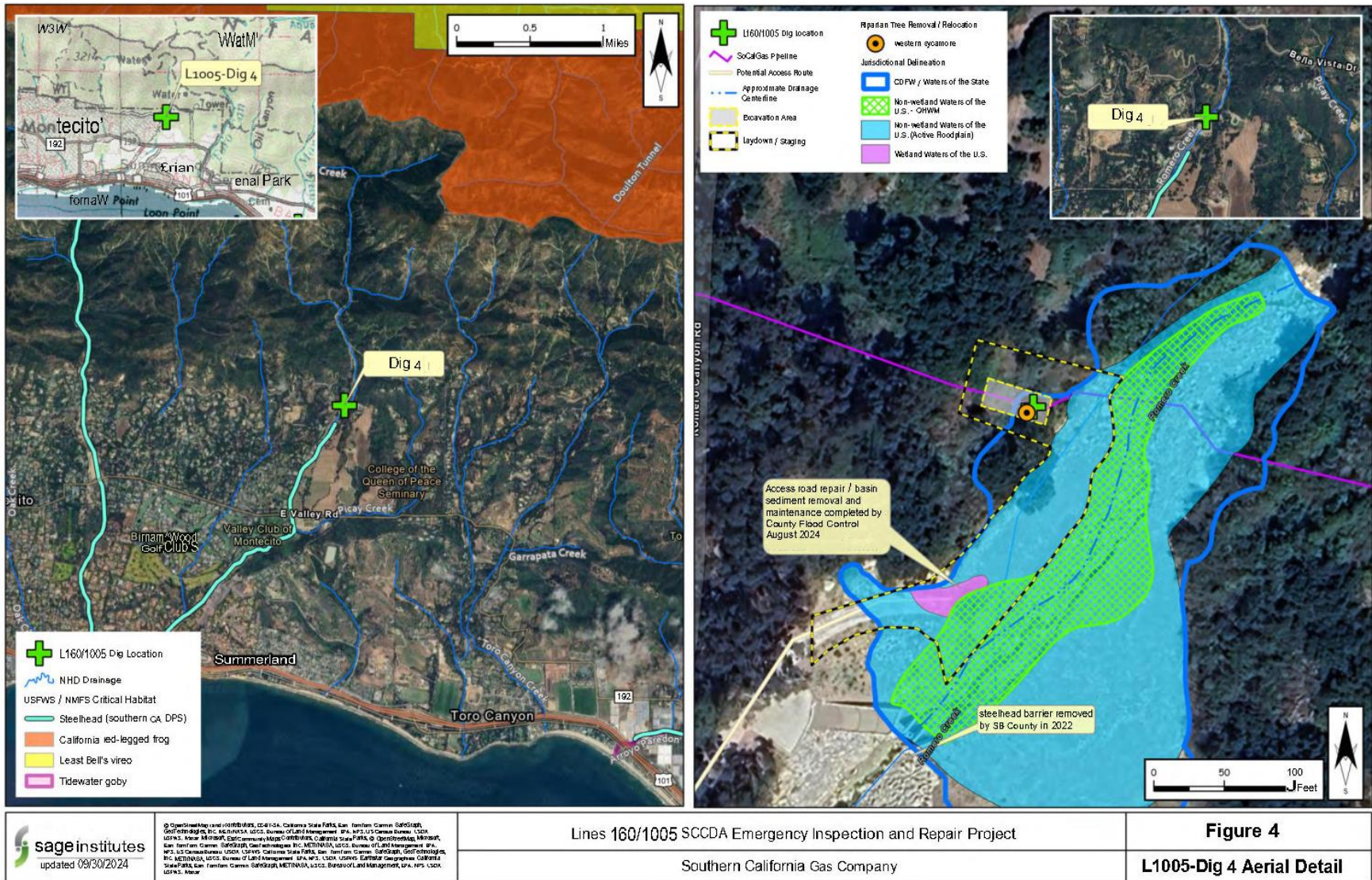
**MONITORING:** P&D permit processing planner shall check plans prior to issuance of the follow-on Land Use Permit. P&D compliance monitoring staff shall spot check in the field.

15. **Noise-02 Construction Hours.** The Owner/Applicant, including all contractors and subcontractors shall limit construction activity, including equipment maintenance and site preparation, to the hours between 7:00 a.m. to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. No construction shall occur on weekends or State holidays. Any subsequent amendment to the Comprehensive General Plan, applicable Community or Specific Plan, or Zoning Code noise standard upon which these construction hours are based shall supersede the hours stated herein. **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:** The Owner/Applicant shall provide and post a sign stating these restrictions at all construction site entries. **TIMING:** Signs shall be posted prior to commencement of construction and maintained throughout construction. **MONITORING:** P&D enforcement staff shall respond to complaints.
  
16. **Geo-02 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan.** Where required by the latest edition of the California Green Code and/or Chapter 14 of the Santa Barbara County Code, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Storm Water Management Plan (SWMP) and/or an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) shall be implemented as part of the project. Grading and erosion and sediment control plans shall be designed to minimize erosion during construction and shall be implemented for the duration of the grading period and until re-graded areas have been stabilized by structures, long-term erosion control measures or permanent landscaping. The Owner/Applicant shall submit the SWPPP, SWMP or ESCP using Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to stabilize the site, protect natural watercourses/creeks, prevent erosion, convey storm water runoff to existing drainage systems keeping contaminants and sediments onsite. Information on Erosion Control requirements can be found on the County web site re: Grading Ordinance Chapter 14 (<http://sbcountyplanning.org/building/grading.cfm>) refer to Erosion and Sediment Control Plan Requirements; and in the California Green Code for SWPPP (projects < 1 acre) and/or SWMP requirements. **PLAN REQUIREMENTS:** The grading and SWPPP, SWMP and/or ESCP shall be submitted for review and approved by P&D prior to approval of the follow-on Land Use Permit. The plan shall be designed to address erosion, sediment and pollution control during all phases of construction until all disturbed areas are permanently stabilized. **TIMING:** The SWPPP requirements shall be implemented prior to the commencement of grading and throughout the year. The ESCP/SWMP requirements shall be implemented between November 1st and April 15th of each year, except pollution control measures shall be implemented year-round. **MONITORING:** P&D staff shall perform site inspections throughout the construction phase as appropriate.

Attachments:

- A. Site Plan
  - B. CEQA Notice of Exemption
- cc: Roy Lee, First District Supervisor  
Errin Briggs, Deputy Director  
Jacquelynn Ybarra, Supervising Planner  
Katie Nall, Planner

Figure 1: Line 1005 Inland Overview



## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:** Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Jacquelynn Ybarra, Supervising Planner, Planning & Development

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

**APN:** 155-030-044

**Case No.:** 24EMP-00013

**Location:** 974 Romero Canyon Road, Santa Barbara CA 93108

**Project Title:** SoCalGas Line 1005 Dig Site 4 (2024 SCCDA Program)

**Project Applicant:** SoCalGas, 24650 Avenue Rockefeller, Valencia, CA 93115, ATTN: Wes Pollard

**Project Description:** The project is the request by SoCalGas for an Emergency Permit for the inspection and repair of a pipeline anomaly on Line 1005, a high-pressure gas transmission line, located at 974 Romero Canyon Road in unincorporated Santa Barbara County, known as Dig 4. Work includes excavation, inspection, and repair requiring a temporary trench to access the pipeline. The project will require up to an approximately 20-foot (ft) by 10-ft trench to a depth of up to 13 ft (up to 100 cubic yards) entirely within the existing 16.5-foot SoCalGas easement. A new pipe segment will be welded to the existing line in the existing trench and hydrostatically tested in place, if necessary. Dig 4 may require the installation of stopple fittings on the existing pipeline and a temporary bypass to ensure continuous natural gas supply to the north coast areas while isolating the section of pipe to be inspected and repaired/replaced. Backfilling the trench involves replacing the excavated subsoil in the trench and re-spreading the stockpiled topsoil to return the surface to its original grade. After the work has been completed, the temporary work area will be de-compacted to pre-project conditions, if necessary, and the project area will be restored to as near-pre-construction contours as feasible. Impacted trees, root masses, and/or sprigs will also be re-buried to the extent feasible to support natural regeneration from on-site sources. The proposed restoration consists of restoring existing contours and applying a native seed mix after project completion and re-planting impacted plant material. Equipment may include backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms. A biological monitor will be on site daily to ensure biological and construction best management practices are implemented to avoid and minimize any impacts to special-status species. The project will adhere to stormwater BMPs from the SoCalGas Best Management Practices Manual for Water Quality and Stormwater Management, dated March 2024. Work will also adhere to the Clean Water Act U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Regional Water Quality Control Board approvals and conditions of approval under Regional General Permits No. 63.

CEQA Notice of Exemption  
Emergency Permit Case No. 24EMP-00013  
SoCalGas Line 1005 Dig Site 4 (2024 SCCDA Program)  
Attachment B

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of Santa Barbara

**Name of Person or Entity Carrying Out Project:** Wes Pollard, SoCalGas

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency

**Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guidelines Section:** CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b) (Emergency Repair for Service Facilities).

**Reasons to support exemption findings:** CEQA Guideline Section 15269(b) exempts “Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare”. Emergency repairs include those that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency. The project constitutes an emergency because the pipeline pressure in Line 1005 must be reduced due to the stress, corrosion, and cracking indications. Line 1005 cannot return to full operating pressure until the repairs are completed, and lower operating pressure cannot support customers. Additionally, work activities have the potential to impact waterways and ESH. As such, the timeframe to permit this work as a “standard” project would have resulted in reduced gas availability in the winter months, which was projected to result in curtailment of non-core customers and if demand was high enough, possible loss of gas to core customers. As such, the project is required immediately to avoid the disruption of essential public services and to maintain public safety and system reliability. Therefore, the project was determined to be an emergency activity to avoid a disruption of essential public services, and a statutory exemption applies.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Jacquelynn Ybarra, Supervising Planner

**Email:** [jybarra@countyofsb.org](mailto:jybarra@countyofsb.org)

**Department/Division Representative:** Errin Briggs, Deputy Director



**Date:** February 13, 2026

**Acceptance Date:**

**Distribution:** Hearing Support Staff

**Date Filed by County Clerk:**