



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AGENDA LETTER

Department Name:

Planning & Development

Department Number:

053

Agenda Date:

July 7, 2026

Placement:

Administrative Agenda

Estimated Time:

N/A

Continued Item:

No

If Yes, date from:

N/A

Vote Required:

Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s): Lisa Plowman, Planning and Development

DocuSigned by:
Lisa Plowman
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CONTACT: Errin Briggs, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: Report on Emergency Permits 24EMP-00013 and 25EMP-00005 for the inspection and repair of two SoCalGas high-pressure gas transmission pipeline locations, First and Third Supervisorial Districts

Concurrences:

County Counsel Concurrence:

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file this report on Emergency Permits 24EMP-00013 and 25EMP-00005 approved by the Director of Planning & Development to allow for the inspection and repair of two SoCalGas high-pressure gas transmission pipeline locations; and

- b) Determine that receiving and filing this report is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as it is an administrative government activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

This Board Agenda Letter serves as an administrative report on two Emergency Permits issued to SoCalGas (Applicant) in March 2026 and April 2026 for the inspection and repair of two separate high-pressure gas transmission pipeline locations in accordance with Section 35-171.6 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance and Section 35.82.090 of the Montecito Land Use and Development Code.

Discussion:

On October 8, 2024, SoCalGas informed the Planning and Development Energy Division that inspection and repair was needed along SoCalGas' Line 1005 high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline known as Dig Site 4, located at 974 Romero Canyon Road in the Montecito Community Plan area (APN 155-030-044), First Supervisorial District. The project was identified as one of ten pipeline locations from the Ventura River to the La Goleta Storage Facility that required immediate inspection and repair due to compounded landslide damage, to maintain pressure and service for the 2025/2026 winter season. An Emergency Permit is required for this work as Line 1005 does not have an underlying County use permit that includes ongoing maintenance and repair activities. Work was authorized by the Director on October 8, 2024, and occurred from October 2024 through January 10, 2025. Emergency Permit No. 24EMP-00013 was issued to SoCalGas for this work on March 5, 2026. In accordance with Section 35.82.090 of the Montecito Land Use and Development Code, SoCal Gas applied for a subsequent Land Use Permit on April 2, 2026, within 30 days following the issuance of the Emergency Permit. Land Use Permit No. 26LUP-00091 is currently being processed through the Energy Division.

Similarly, on September 26, 2025, SoCalGas informed staff that inspection and repair was needed along SoCalGas' Line 1010 high-pressure natural gas transmission line, located near 17200 Calle Mariposa Reina in the Gaviota Coastal Plan area (APN 081-130-076), Third Supervisorial District. The project was identified as an Immediate Repair Condition as defined within federal and state regulations and required repair within five days of the condition identification. An Emergency Permit is required for this work as Line 1010 does not have an underlying County use permit that includes ongoing maintenance and repair activities. Work was authorized via email by the Director on September 26, 2025, and occurred from September 29, 2025, through October 28, 2025. Emergency Permit No. 25EMP-000005 was issued to SoCalGas for this work on April 22, 2026. In accordance with Section 35-171 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, SoCal Gas applied for a subsequent Coastal Development Permit on May 22, 2026, within 30 days following the issuance of the Emergency Permit. Coastal Development Permit No. 26CDP-00048 is currently being processed through the Energy Division.

The immediate authorization and subsequent Emergency Permits were granted by the Director upon determining an emergency existed, upon determining the actions were consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, applicable community and area plans, and the Development Code, and upon reviewing any public comments. The Notifications of the pending Emergency Permits were distributed to surrounding property owners and interested parties in July of 2025 for Dig Site 4, and in April of 2026 for Line 1010; no public comments were received for either project. Pursuant to Section 35-171.6 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance and Section 35.82.090.I of the Montecito Land Use and Development Code, the Planning & Development Director is required to report in writing to the Board of Supervisors the nature of the emergency and the work involved. This report satisfies those

requirements. The Board's receiving and filing of this report is an administrative action under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15373(b)(5) that does not constitute a separate project for purposes of environmental review.

Background:

Dig Site 4, Line 1005. Dig Site 4 was located approximately 230 feet upstream (northwest) of an existing stormwater detention basin owned and maintained by the County of Santa Barbara Flood Control District, within the inland Montecito Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Overlay of Romero Creek. The repair area was on the outer edge of the riparian habitat adjacent to and upslope of the 100-year floodplain. Work included the excavation, inspection, repair, and restoration of a 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 new pipe segment was welded to the existing line and hydrostatically tested in place. After the work was completed, the area was de-compacted to pre-project conditions, impacted trees, root masses, and/or sprigs were re-buried to the extent feasible, and applicable areas were seeded with erosion control native seed mix. Equipment included a backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms. Temporary work areas were used to store spoil and construction materials and to facilitate pipeline inspection/repair activities. Equipment and personnel were mobilized to the work areas via the detention basin gate and access from Romero Canyon Road. No new access roads were constructed. No water diversion was required. A biological monitor was onsite to ensure that best management practices were implemented to avoid and minimize any impacts. Temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters at Dig 4 included 0.16 acres of non-wetland riparian habitat, 0.19 acres of 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 western sycamore tree (*Platanus racemosa*) was removed, and one coast live oak tree (*Quercus agrifolia*) was trimmed. Work adhered to stormwater best management practices from SoCalGas' Best Management Practices Manual for Water Quality and Stormwater Management, as well as to Regional General Permit No. 63 issued for the work by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Regional Water Quality Control Board. County permit conditions required the Applicant to implement a Tree Replacement Plan, Habitat Restoration Plan, and Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, and obtain other jurisdictional permits as needed, among other avoidance and minimization measures (see Attachment A).

The project constituted an emergency because the pipeline had stress, corrosion, and cracking indications, and had to be reduced from full operating pressure. A lower operating pressure could not support customers; 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 during the winter season. As such, the project was required immediately to ensure the safety and integrity of gas distribution pipelines to maintain services essential to the public health, safety, and welfare.

Line 1010. The inspection and repair site on Line 1010 was located approximately 0.13 miles west of the Santa Barbara County Fire Station No. 18, and 0.52 miles west of the idle Gaviota Oil Heating Facility along the Gaviota coast. The work site was located outside of mapped Environmentally Sensitive Habitat; however, it was located 0.67 miles from breeding populations of California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and critical habitat associated with Gaviota Creek and was within critical habitat for Gaviota Tarplant (*Deinandra increscens* ssp. *villosa*). A focused rare plant survey was conducted during the blooming period for Gaviota Tarplant, and no rare plants or other special-status species were observed. Work included the excavation, inspection, repair, and restoration of a 20-foot by 8-ft trench to a depth of up to 8 ft (up to 50 cubic yards) entirely within the existing 16.5-foot

SoCalGas easement, and stopple installations requiring two 20-ft by 20-ft work areas for a total work area of approximately 1,400 square feet. After the work was completed, the area was de-compacted to pre-project conditions, impacted trees, root masses, and/or sprigs were re-buried to the extent feasible, and applicable areas were seeded with erosion control native seed mix. Equipment included a backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms. An estimated 0.51 acres of non-native upland vegetation was impacted. No oak trees or native trees were present in the work area. A biological monitor was onsite to ensure that best management practices were implemented to avoid and minimize any impacts. Permit conditions required the Applicant to implement an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, among other avoidance and minimization measures (see Attachment B).

The project constituted an emergency because the site was identified as an Immediate Repair Condition as defined within federal and state regulations. An Immediate Repair Condition requires SoCalGas to implement measures to remediate the condition within five days of identification. As such, the project was required immediately and the timeframe to permit this work as a “standard” project was not possible. Therefore, the project was determined to be an emergency activity that required immediately ensure the safety and integrity of gas distribution pipelines to maintain services essential to the public health, safety, and welfare.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Costs for preparing the Emergency Permits and the follow-on use permits are fully reimbursed by the Applicant through payment of Planning & Development permit processing fees. The cost to process these Emergency Permits is approximately 40 staff hours each, which equals \$13,120.00 each or \$26,240.00 in total. Funding for permit processing is budgeted in the Planning & Development’s Permitting Budget Program on Page D-307 of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Adopted Budget. There is no impact to the General Fund.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2025 - 2026	Total
General Fund		\$0
State		\$0
Federal		\$0
Fees (approximate)		\$26,240
Total		\$26,240

Attachments:

Attachment A – Emergency Permit 24EMP-00013

Attachment B – Emergency Permit 25EMP-00005

Contact Information:

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