

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Katie Nall, 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: 001-450-004; 001-450-007; **Case No.:** 24EMP-00011
065-250-027; 065-250-028.

Location: 7200 Casitas Pass Road (Lat: 34.393026 Long: -119.461961); 1148 S More Ranch (Lat: 34.423611 Long: -119.813883).

Project Title: SoCal Gas Line 1005 & Line 160 - Emergency Permit

Project Applicant: Southern California Gas Company

Project Description: The project is the request by SoCalGas for an Emergency Permit to inspect and repair two potential stress, corrosion, and cracking indications demonstrating scouring and loss of integrity of Line 1005 (L1005) and Line 160 (L160), which are both high-pressure gas transmission pipelines. The two identified work areas include anomaly L160 SCCDAE2, referred to as Dig #2, and Anomaly L1005 SCCDAE7, referred to as Dig #7. The anomalies have resulted in reduced pipeline pressure that will continue until these conditions have been inspected and repaired or replaced. The project will maintain public safety and system reliability for the upcoming winter months in which gas service is especially crucial and an essential public service.

Dig #2 is on Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 065-250-006 and 065-250-027, located near 1148 S More Ranch Road directly east of the La Goleta Storage Facility between More Ranch Road and the Atascadero Creek in the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan (EGVCP). The work area is within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat associated with the Southern Coast Live Oak riparian corridor in which 2 Coast Live Oak Trees and 1 Arroyo Willow will need to be removed. Work at Dig #2 will require a temporary 20-foot by 10-foot trench to a depth of up to 15 feet (approximately 112 cubic yards) to access the pipeline. A 0.55-acre staging and equipment storage area is proposed on existing disturbed area within APN 065-250-028 adjacent to but outside the ESH. Prior to construction, a certified arborist will conduct an inventory of protected trees and all ESH and coastal wetlands will be mapped. Impacts to ESH, coastal wetlands, and protected trees will be confirmed after construction is completed.

Dig #7 is on APNs 001-450-004 and 001-450-007, located at 7200 Casitas Pass Road northeast of the City of Carpinteria. Site access is directly from an existing private drive off of Casitas Pass Road, and 30-foot temporary construction equipment access may be needed in the SoCalGas easement over

the pipeline west of an existing valve. Work at Dig #7 requires a temporary 35-foot by 10-foot trench to a depth of 15 feet (approximately 195 cubic yards) to access the pipeline. Staging and equipment storage is proposed in a 0.13-acre, partially cleared orchard north of and adjacent to the excavation area that can be accessed via the private drive. Up to 16 coast live oak trees are proposed for removal to provide access to Dig #7.

Work includes excavation, inspection, and repair requiring a temporary trench to access the pipeline entirely within the existing SoCalGas easement. Excavations will be completed by hand and/or excavator in ESH and protected tree critical root zones under the direction of a qualified biological monitor and/or arborist. 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.

The trench will be backfilled with the native soil after the repair is complete. 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. Access to the pipeline may require trimming of protected trees and encroachment into critical root zones. This work will be conducted under the supervision of an arborist/qualified biologist. The tree protection zones/work boundary will be fenced and marked with signage. A biological monitor will be present on site daily for the duration of work within the TPZ at Dig #2 and Dig #7. The biological monitor will provide 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.

Impacted tree root masses and sprigs will be re-buried to the extent feasible to support natural regeneration from onsite sources. As such, the proposed restoration consists of restoring existing contours, a native hydroseed seed mix after project completion (prior to November 15, 2024), and re-planting impacted plant material. All open trenches and excavations will be covered (i.e., no gaps or holes) or protected with exclusionary fencing to prevent wildlife entrapment and ramped so that animals can escape. Biological BMPs will be employed throughout the construction including using pre-existing travel routes, inspecting under staged equipment for wildlife, ramping or covering excavation at the end of the workday, maintaining general housekeeping, wildlife avoidance, inspecting excavations, and covering/elevating the ends of pipe segments, among other recommendations.

Equipment includes backhoe, excavator, dump truck, welding truck, crew trucks, water truck, bulldozer, lowboy with trailer, portable equipment (generators, air compressors), and portable restrooms. All excavation is proposed entirely within the existing SoCalGas easement. SoCalGas (including its subcontractors) have access to and use of the Temporary Workspace for approximately three (3) months. However, work on each dig site is expected to take approximately 6 to 9 weeks. Hours of work are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. SoCalGas will provide traffic control associated with the project at all times during work hours to ensure safety along travel corridors. The project will also implement appropriate Storm Water Best Management Practices (BMPs) from the SoCalGas Water Quality and Storm Water Best Management Practices Manual.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Santa Barbara

Name of Person or Entity Carrying Out Project: SoCal Gas, Chris Sowell

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 160 and Line 1005 has been reduced due to the stress, corrosion, and cracking indications on each Line. Both Lines cannot return to full operating pressure until the repairs are completed. The lowered pressure is not able to support customers. The project will maintain public safety and system reliability; additionally, and both sites have potential to impact waterways and ESHA. As such, the timeframe to permit these as “standard” projects 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 remediation of the two locations were determined to be emergency activities in order to avoid a disruption of essential public services. Therefore, this statutory exemption applies to the proposed project.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Katie Nall, Planner

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Department/Division Representative:



SoCal Gas Gaviota – Emergency Permit, Case No. 24EMP-00011
June 16, 2025
Attachment 2

Date: June 16, 2025

Acceptance Date:

Distribution: Hearing Support Staff

Date Filed by County Clerk: _____