



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
(805) 568-2240

**Department Name:** Planning & Development  
**Department No.:** 053  
**For Agenda Of:** February 6, 2024  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Lisa Plowman, Director (805) 568-2086  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: John Zorovich, Deputy Director (805) 568-2519  
**SUBJECT: Report on Case No. 23EMP-00017: Emergency Permit to allow the repair of SoCal Gas' natural gas transmission pipeline 247, Third Supervisorial District**

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: N/A

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file this report on Emergency Permit Case No. 23EMP-00017, approved by the Director of Planning & Development on September 11, 2023, which authorized the excavation and repair of gas transmission pipeline Line 247; 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 item is a report on the SoCal Gas Emergency Permit for the repair of a natural gas pipeline on the Gaviota coast. On September 11, 2023, SoCal Gas informed County staff that three anomalies requiring immediate repair were discovered on Line 247, which is an existing 16-inch high-pressure natural gas transmission pipeline. The three identified work areas are located within El Capitan Creek (Dig No. 1), near Tajiguas Landfill Road (Dig No. 2), and near Gato Canyon Road (Dig No. 3).

Section 35-171 of the Article II Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) authorizes the Director of the Planning & Development Department (P&D) to temporarily defer standard permit requirements of the CZO and issue an Emergency Permit when an emergency action is warranted. Accordingly, verbal authorization to move forward with the above emergency work was provided by the Director of Planning & Development on September 11, 2023, and the required Emergency Permit was issued on November 22, 2023.

The proposed project included preparing a laydown area at each location and excavating a 10-foot wide, 15-foot deep trench at each site to expose the pipeline. Work activities included the installation of three stopple fittings and a temporary bypass on the existing pipeline to ensure continuous natural gas supply through the line while isolating the section of pipe to be inspected and repaired/replaced. The Applicant completed all work activities and demobilized from the two SCCDA Dig sites on November 28, 2023, as well as the IRC Dig on December 14, 2023.

Pursuant to Article II Section 35-171.5.3, an Emergency Permit does not constitute an entitlement to allow for development, and an application for the applicable planning permit must be submitted within 30 days following the granting of the Emergency Permit. A Coastal Development Permit with a public hearing (CDH) is required in order to permit the work described in the Emergency Permit. The Applicant submitted the CDH application on November 28, 2023, which staff is currently processing.

Issuance of the Emergency Permit was consistent with Article II, as the action provided an immediate response to an emergency situation in the interest of health, safety, and public welfare. The Department granted the Emergency Permit based on a statutory exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b)) due to the need to maintain essential public service facilities posed by the threat of the exposed pressurized natural gas transmission pipeline and the potential for release of natural gas into the environment. A copy of the CEQA Exemption is included herein as Attachment 2. 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.

Pursuant to Article II Section 35-171.6, the Planning & Development Director is required to report in writing to the Board of Supervisors and the California Coastal Commission the nature of the emergency and the work involved. This report satisfies that requirement.

**Background:**

The project is broken up into three different sites located along SoCal Gas Pipeline 247 within the Gaviota Coast. The three identified work areas include an Immediate Repair Condition (IRC) within El Capitan Creek, a Stress Corrosion & Cracking Direct Assessment (SCCDA) Dig #2 near Tajiguas Landfill Road, and a SCCDA Dig #3 near Gato Canyon Road. All sites are within intermittent drainages within SoCalGas's existing right-of-way (ROW) and could therefore affect waterways and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH). The repairs are necessary to bring Line 247 back to its full operational pressure, to support the north coast region.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

County staff costs for preparing the Emergency Permit are reimbursed by the applicant in conformance with the current Board-adopted fee ordinance. The estimated total cost to process this Emergency Permit is approximately 20 staff hours, which equates to \$5,640.00. Funding for this project is budgeted in the Planning and Development Department's Permitting Budget Program as shown on page 313 of the County of Santa Barbara Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Adopted Budget.

**Attachments:**

1. Emergency Permit 23EMP-00017
2. CEQA Notice of Exemption

**Authored by:**

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