

## **IMPORTANT POINTS FOR THE AUGUST 31 PUBLIC MEETING**

- **The lack of public notice is a real concern to all of us.** All of the affected and interested homeowners associations, environmental organizations, recreational groups and community leaders are well-known and many have public websites. Yet, neither the Gas Company nor the various agencies considering the permits gave any public notice to these groups either of the permit applications or the alleged exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (known as CEQA). This deprived the public of the opportunity to review and comment upon the permits, the alleged CEQA exemption, or the proposed mitigation measures.
- **Why would the Gas Company be afraid of such notice and community involvement?**
- **There should be another public meeting with more advance notice.** This public meeting is a start, although it should have come long before tonight. However, given the last-minute notice of this meeting, and the fact that many people are on vacation or getting their families ready for the start of the school year, there are many important community leaders and groups that could not make it tonight. It is not sufficient for the Gas Company to hold a public meeting for the first time on such short notice, especially since the Gas Company contends the permits have already been issued, and it is only twelve hours before the Gas Company intends to start their project.
- **How can a five-year project of this scope and admitted environmental impact be totally exempt from environmental review under CEQA?** The Gas Company should not be permitted to start the project until a full analysis of the environmental impacts of the project can be completed under CEQA.
- **The 185 large trees that the Protected Tree Report says will be impacted or removed were there well before the pipelines were constructed and the road has been repaired before without removing or impacting these trees.** Why can't the Gas Company change the project to avoid cutting or impacting any large and ancient trees?
- **The project should be put on hold** until the community can receive and understand the project documents, have meaningful input into mitigation measures, and until a proper review of the environmental impacts of the project can be had under the California Environmental Quality Act. *Meaningful input means the opportunity to modify the project to lessen its environmental impacts.*

- **A mere two-week delay in the commencement of the planned project is important, but it is not enough.**
- **While the Gas Company owns much of the land in the bottom of the Canyon, it does not own the streambed, which is a public stream that is regulated by the Department of Fish and Game, among other agencies.** Moreover, Sullivan Canyon—with its perennial pools of water, springs and stream—is a rare and important habitat for many birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. These include bobcats, deer, coyotes, lizards and other animals that rely on the water, plants and shady cover of the Canyon to survive and thrive.
- **In addition, Sullivan Canyon is an important recreational resource.** People from all over the Westside, San Fernando Valley, and other parts of Los Angeles come to Sullivan Canyon to hike, ride horses and bike. Both kids and adults flock to the Canyon every day to take advantage of its unique environment.
- **The public documents state that the project will have unmitigated impacts.** Any work in this environmentally sensitive area must be done only after consideration and mitigation of any significant environmental impacts. The purchase of off-site mitigation measures in areas many miles away will not mitigate the actual environmental impacts in Sullivan Canyon.
- **There has been no discussion of alternatives to the current proposed project.** None of the project documents we have seen analyze, or even discuss, any alternative routes or construction methods for the roadway and pipeline maintenance. This is one of the many problems arising from the fact that the project has not undergone any environmental review under CEQA.
- **We do not oppose proper maintenance of the gas pipelines.** Safety of the pipelines is very important.
- **However, such maintenance and the reconstruction of the access road should be done to minimize and mitigate any significant environmental impacts.**
- **The project should be changed so that it will, at a minimum:**
  - Avoid any removal of protected trees more than 8 inches in diameter;
  - Avoid any impacts on the major branches and root systems of the 185 large oaks, sycamores and other protected trees that the

Protected Tree Report says will be affected by the project. Such impacts can weaken and kill these ancient trees;

- Repair the access road to the minimum possible width and with the minimum possible number of turnouts—12 feet wide with turnouts up the entire length of the canyon is too big;
  - Minimize the use of concrete and rip-rap. This is a wild area and the road should have the minimum possible impact. Mere convenience and cost-saving to the Gas Company is not a legitimate justification to put in a wider, heavily engineered roadway, when alternatives are available to minimize the environmental impacts of the project without sacrificing safety; and
  - Fully restore the Canyon and reverse the environmental impacts from the proposed pipeline repair excavations.
- **All construction and subsequent mitigation efforts must be closely monitored by the environmental agencies, and all mitigation measures must be strictly enforced.** What are the agencies doing to ensure this?
- **Fire Safety is of paramount importance.** The fact that the project is being commenced in the very heart of the most dangerous time of the fire season—without any prior notice to the community—is of great concern. The recent Getty fire was caused by brush clearance crews. The hills in other areas of Los Angeles are burning as we speak. What is the Gas Company doing to prevent fires from its construction, tree-cutting, brush clearance and welding work in the Canyon?
- **Please put an immediate hold on the project and ensure that the public is meaningfully notified and consulted regarding both this first stage of work—but also regarding all subsequent stages of work over the course of this five-year project.**