

The Honorable Michael Regan  
Administrator  
United States Environmental Protection Agency

This letter is on behalf of a coalition of community members, non-profit organizations, and businesses in Ventura, California who are concerned about the significant negative health and environmental impacts of Southern California Gas Company's ("SoCalGas") proposal to expand a natural gas compressor station which would double the existing facility's emission of PM10, SOx, and CO – all across the street from an elementary school where students are 93% Hispanic or Latinx, 89% are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 80% are identified as English Learners. This project, which also would entail the disturbance and removal of thousands of tons of soil heavily contaminated with lead and other carcinogens, is moving forward without any Health Impact Assessment or other serious environmental justice analysis.

We urge you and the United States Environmental Protection Agency to demand that SoCalGas and relevant permitting agencies conduct robust health and environmental assessments relating to this proposed project and any alternatives, and act to protect the health and welfare of the neighboring communities already overburdened by pollution.

The project at issue is SoCalGas' proposed Ventura Compressor Modernization Project, located at 1555 North Olive Street in the City of Ventura ("Project"). The Project would expand an existing natural gas compressor station by adding up to four new, larger compressors and related structures to the site. Notably, this Project is just a few miles away from the Ventura Wastewater Treatment Facility, which you recently visited on August 18<sup>th</sup>. We invite you to return to Ventura and tour the proposed Project area, including the neighboring communities who would be most impacted and harmed by it.

The compressor station is *across the street* from the Boys and Girls Club of Ventura and the EP Foster Elementary School attended by nearly 400 children from the surrounding predominantly Hispanic and Latinx community. The Project is also less than a mile from De Anza Academy of Technology and the Arts ("DATA"), a junior high school where more than 800 children attend school. DATA students are 67% Hispanic or Latinx, and 70% are socioeconomically disadvantaged. More than 13,000 residents live within one mile of the compressor station and the community rates high on several of EPA's EJ Indexes (EJscreen tool):

- \* 77<sup>th</sup> percentile for PM2.5
- \* 71<sup>st</sup> percentile for lifetime cancer risk from inhalation of air toxics
- \* 68<sup>th</sup> percentile for air toxics respiratory hazard index risk
- \* 76<sup>th</sup> percentile for proximity to sites with a risk management plan (potential chemical accidents).

Last year, at the height of the pandemic, West Ventura residents received very minimal communication about SoCalGas' plans to expand and increase the capacity of its Ventura compressor station. This is extremely troubling, not only because of the inadequate public notice and lack of opportunity for local community input, but also because of the severe health and environmental impacts that compressor stations of this kind bring. Compressor stations are prone to explosions and can release pollutants into the air. In 2017, NASA found this

Ventura compressor site to be a “super emitter” of methane, one of a few sites in California that creates a major portion of the state’s emissions. This facility in West Ventura has also had several issues that have led to complaints of odors and evacuations. In fact, during this year’s July 4 weekend, community members cited a strong smell of natural gas throughout the area, prompting calls to 911.

To date, neither SoCalGas nor state regulatory agencies have conducted meaningful health and environmental impact studies pertaining to the proposed expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure in the midst of an environmental justice community. This is unacceptable and runs counter to the Biden Administration’s and your Agency’s environmental justice action priorities. The Project should proceed no further without an Environmental Impact Report, which should include an independent alternatives analysis and a Health Impact Assessment. These requirements should be required before SoCalGas receives the necessary permits to construct new polluting facilities in the midst of our already disadvantaged and overburdened community. Protecting the health of our children is not discretionary, and EPA must intervene to ensure that the voices of the impacted communities are heard, respected, and that our community receives the full protections afforded by our environmental laws and process.

We need EPA to ensure that this ongoing environmental injustice is appropriately addressed, and that our children and our larger community are not jeopardized by SoCalGas’ plans to increase their profits at the expense of our health and future. We invite you to visit the site in West Ventura and would be pleased to host you and any of your colleagues so you can better understand the serious nature of our predicament, or provide you with any additional information to assist EPA in this matter.

Your leadership on environmental justice issues matters to us, and we need EPA to do all that it can to protect our health and ensure that our voices are heard, and to require robust health and environmental assessments (and alternatives analyses) to ensure the integrity of the environmental decision-making process.

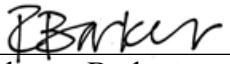
Sincerely,



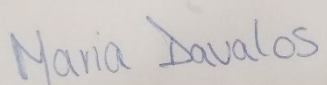
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Merrill Berge  
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Tomás Morales Rebecchi  
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Kari Aist  
Leadership Circle  
Showing up for Racial Justice Ventura County



*Jan Dietrick*

Jan Dietrick  
Policy Team Leader  
350 Ventura County Climate Hub



*Margoth Davis*

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Margot Davis  
Ventura Westside Homeowner &  
Founder of Simpson Tract Historical District  
Westside Clean Air Coalition

**Westside Clean Air**  

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**Aire Limpió Para La Avenida**

*Rose Ann Witt*

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Rose Ann Witt  
Co-Founder  
Conejo Climate Coalition



*Vic Thasiah*

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Vic Thasiah  
Executive Director  
Runners for Public Lands



**RUNNERS FOR  
PUBLIC LANDS**