



Bulk Propane Facility

Incompatible hazardous land use
next to medium-high-density
residential Pillar Ridge community

Presentation by Pillar Ridge Homeowners
to Midcoast Community Council
October 11, 2017

Explosive Hazard



Explosive Hazard Recommendations for bulk LPG next to Pillar Ridge, June 2004

“The existing stationary propane tank has the capacity of containing 15,000 gallons of propane fuel. HUD charts show a catastrophic accident would result in a 250 ft fire width and height. Any building within 180 ft would be combustible and any person within 900 ft could sustain major burns. Explosion blast overpressure for building and people within 560 ft would be life threatening. In the event of an explosion, since there are mobilehomes as close as 75 ft from the stationary tank, most of the park would be subjected to explosive and/or thermal radiation.”

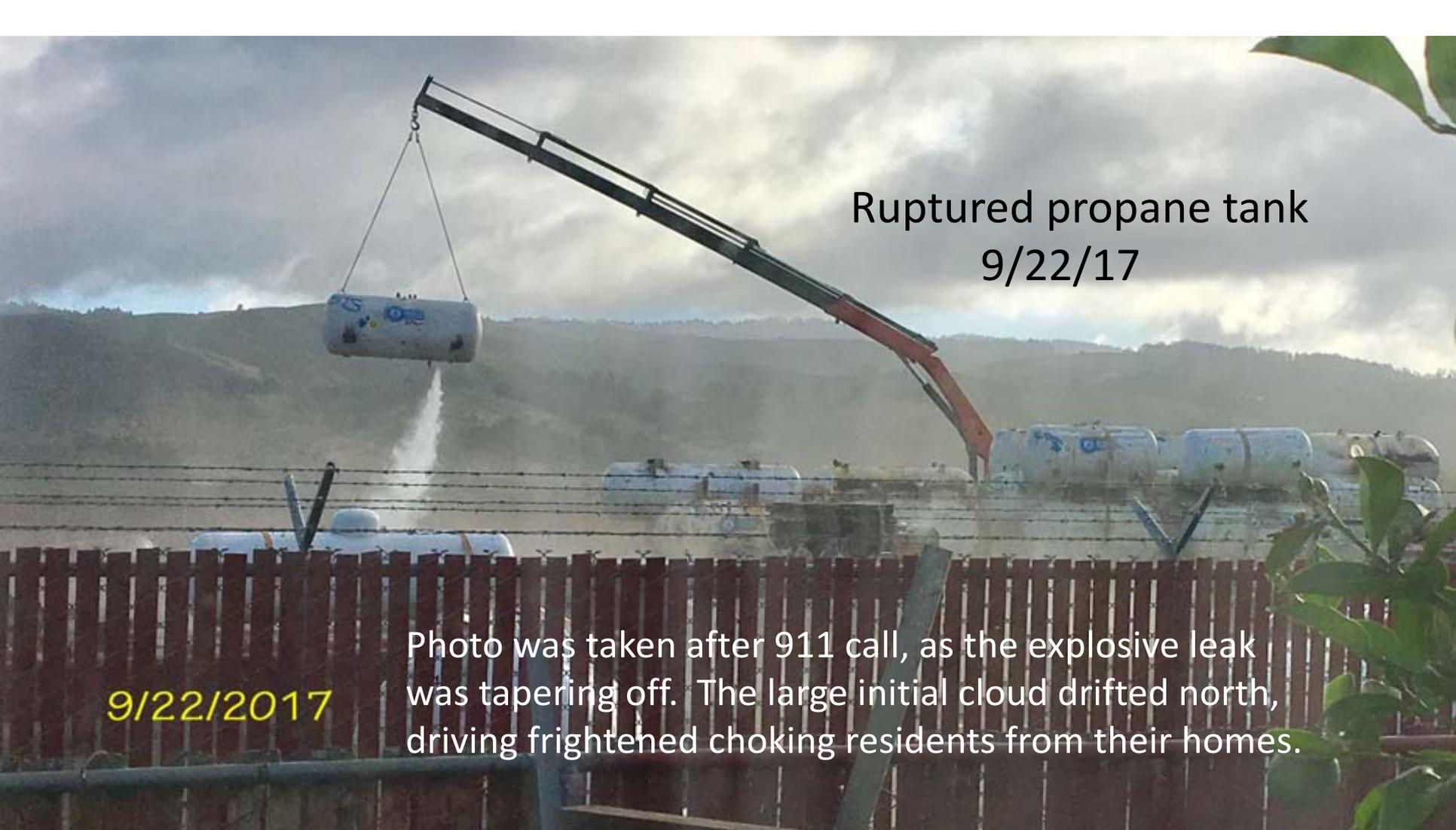
Robert Shaw, Consulting Environmental Planner



The practice of de-valving the hundreds of tanks rotated in and out of the lot releases the odorant mercaptan causing unnecessary public alarm and repeated wasted time/resources as the Pillar Ridge natural gas system must be investigated to rule out any genuine leaks.

The odorant is leaked so frequently, with the same explanation, that some residents suffer the recurring noxious odor in silence and no longer bother to report a suspected gas leak.

Pillar Ridge residents were assured these smaller tanks were empty and posed no hazard.



Ruptured propane tank
9/22/17

9/22/2017

Photo was taken after 911 call, as the explosive leak was tapering off. The large initial cloud drifted north, driving frightened choking residents from their homes.

Email from Cal Fire Assistant Chief Cole on the 9/22 incident:

“When the first engine company arrived, they met with AmeriGas personnel who were in the process of decommissioning propane tanks stored on their property. The crew did not observe any leaking or odors of propane and did not see any hazards present.”

Leak from 15,000-gal tank was determined to be the result of “operator error”.

10/3/2017

We don't know how long the tank had been leaking.

leak



Email from Cal Fire Assistant Chief Cole:

“The 10/3 event came in as an odor investigation. Upon the arrival of our engine company, they noted gas leaking from a gauge on a 15,000 gal propane tank. Our crew upgraded the response (2 additional fire engines, and 1 Battalion Commander) and asked for a representative from AmeriGas to report to the scene.”

Leaking propane vapor is heavier than air. In calm air conditions it flows downhill to collect in low places (such as under mobilehomes) awaiting the first spark to ignite an explosion.

Pillar Ridge families are the “sensitive receptors” of this carelessly operated hazardous facility.

Since January 2015, we have asked the County to help us, to protect us, to move the bulk propane facility safely away from us.

Any of these events could have been a tragedy.

Pillar Ridge Homeowners



July 10, 2019 -- Update on Amerigas Bulk Propane Facility

- Oct 2017 – Two years after first request, County issued Violation Notice for failing to remove all the small tanks – completed in Nov 2017.
- Feb 2018 – Application submitted incomplete for after-the-fact Coastal Development Permit (CDP) to legalize 8-ft perimeter fence.
- Sept 2018 – MCC commented on application referral.

Feb 2019



New delivery of tanks – illegal expansion of use without permit



Fire hazard: habitually neglected tall dry weeds

Aug 2018 – County ordered weed abatement after complaint from neighbors.

July 2019 – tall dry weeds –
For scale, the perimeter fence
is 8 ft tall.



July 7, 2019
Tall dry weeds



Overhead power lines
immediately adjacent