

Unspoken Catastrophe in Southern California: Porter Ranch Methane Gas Leak, Thousands of Displaced Families, “No Fly Zone” Declared

By [Gary TruthKings](#)

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The Southern California gas company is now claiming they’ve “pin pointed” a massive methane leak in Porter Ranch, California. This methane leak has led to thousands of displaced families. Of course, the term “pin pointed” is being applied in a liberal sort of way. According to the [LA Times](#).

Workers were continuing to drill a relief well and had reached a depth of 3,800 feet about midnight Saturday when they discovered the site of the target well using a magnetic ranging tool, said Anne Silva, a spokeswoman for SoCal Gas. The well extends more than 8,000 feet below the surface.

The company is still “not sure of the exact location of the leak,” Silva said, “but suspects it is within a shallow level — within the first several hundred feet of the 8,700-foot well.”

This is a leak that the Gas Company feels could go on at least into March. Methane freely polluting the air until at least March. Have we yet to grasp the severity of this? This is a man-made natural catastrophe that may well turn out to be larger in scale than the BP oil spill. According to [Erin Brockovich](#), the side effects, which are deep and involved, take less than a week to start feeling.

After only a week of visiting families in Porter Ranch, I am already experiencing the headaches, nausea and congestion that have plagued this community living at the center of one of the most significant environmental disasters in recent history.

We can’t even begin to fathom what the serious longterm consequences over this matter will turn out to be. Making matters worse, SoCalGas has essentially REFUSED to release information on the surrounding air quality, so we have no way of really grasping how bad this really is. The leak is supposedly residing at over 8000 feet underneath the ground, making it a complicated, complex problem to solve. With the potential of liability and litigation, attorneys are filtering responses on both sides. In just one month, this leak will have accounted for 1/4 of the total estimated methane emissions in the entire state of California.

Vomiting, nosebleeds, trouble breathing, are just the beginning of what these people are experiencing on a daily basis. The community has begun the act of transferring school

children out of the area. While SoCalGas has helped with some relocation efforts, it hasn't been nearly enough. Many people have been stuck waiting on a list to be assigned relocation, all the while, their respiratory systems being decimated by infectious gases.

And all the while, a refusal to release air quality data remains on the part of the company responsible for it all. Sick people only know they are sick, but confirmations of why seem to be vague and protected by a wall of legal jargon and advisors. SoCalGas needs to come out and take responsibility. They need to address the people who are sick and with great urgency resolve their issues. This can't continue to go on.

What shocks me the most is that while this story has received a great deal of coverage, it really hasn't been the top story. Maybe the holidays? Maybe people just aren't interested? All the same, this affects us all. This could (and likely is) happen in any of our communities. Want to see what it looks like using infrared? What are people breathing in?

Four more months of this? This is unacceptable. Why do you think they declared a no-fly zone? Is it really for pilot safety or is it more that they don't want people seeing what's actually happening on the ground? I would go with the latter and strongly encourage any of you reading to make similar considerations. Of course, pilots likely could get sick flying over it, but this sounds a lot more like a corporation covering up a disaster of epic proportions. There is no end game here. There is no reason to believe that this gas leak won't be responsible for mass deaths, near and far in years.

Here is Erin Brockovich speaking on behalf of the people of Porter Ranch.

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