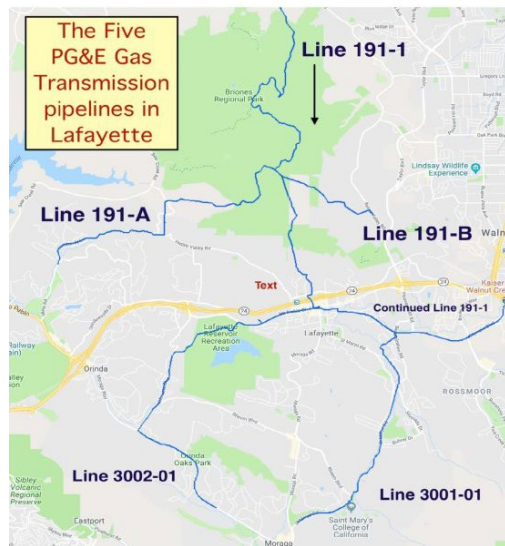




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Work resumes on regulator expansion in Lafayette, anomaly in pipe addressed

By Jennifer Wake



Lafayette's five PG&E high-pressure natural gas transmission lines

high-pressure gas transmission pipeline serving large portions of Contra Costa County, including Lafayette, that runs through the station.

Rosenberg said negotiations with PG&E broke down on Nov. 26, and PG&E notified the HOA midday the next day (the day before Thanksgiving) that the utility was going to resume work Dec. 2. The HOA spent much of the holiday weekend preparing to go to court that Monday.

In PG&E's court filing, outside counsel Matthew C. Henderson stated that the pipeline that runs through the Reliez Regulator station has internal and external corrosion threats. "The current regulator station and pipeline do not allow for ILI, as there is no ILI receiver at the station," the filing stated. "A receiver allows the inspection tool to exit the pipeline after it has traveled and inspected the length of the pipeline internally." The filing also noted that due to federal assessment requirements, the line must be inspected by 2020 so work needed to resume quickly.

In a Dec. 6 email, Rosenberg stated, "We didn't win a temporary restraining order since the local judge felt he didn't have authority due to the federal bankruptcy case. PG&E has moved forward and fully clear-cut the entire property." During the court case, Rosenberg said PG&E disclosed to the court that there is an ongoing "immediate anomaly" on the pipeline within 1,800 feet of this project. "This was never disclosed to the community, the city, the city council, nor us before this court filing," he said.

PG&E noted that it recently conducted a non-traditional ILI on a section of Line 191-B in Lafayette, stating, "The assessment found an 'immediate' anomaly on the pipeline located approximately 1,800 feet from Andreasen Drive and the Reliez Station Regulator Station in Lafayette. PG&E is currently planning a dig in this area to further assess and address this anomaly. PG&E has reduced the pressure on the pipeline to ensure the safety of the line while a mitigation plan is completed."

Michael Dawson, on behalf of the Lafayette Gas Safety Task Force, contacted PG&E for clarification about the information in the filing, stating, "As you know, Line 191-B is not where the Reliez regulator station is. If PG&E did a non-traditional ILI on line 191-B off Blackhawk Road earlier this year, then why is PG&E using an anomaly found there as justification for the project on Line 191-1 several miles away? We're concerned what this means for PG&E's gas safety prioritizations."

PG&E's Vice President of Asset Management and System Operations Christine Cowser Chapman responded, stating, "The last sentence of the quoted excerpt from our outside counsel's memo inadvertently referenced Line 191-B instead of Line 191-1. We apologize for our confusion. While the immediate anomaly referenced in the memo was not on Line 191-1, its recent detection further supports our belief that ILI is the best assessment method to identify these types of anomalies and otherwise fully understand the condition of Line 191-1. Completion of the Reliez Station upgrade project is necessary to enable the inspection of this section of Line 191-1 prior to the 2020 compliance deadline."

Pacific Gas and Electric Company resumed work to clear nearly 30 additional trees as part of the regulator station expansion on property at the intersection of Reliez Station Road and Andreasen Drive after a judge denied a request for a temporary restraining order by the Andreasen Drive Homeowners Association Dec. 2 for PG&E to halt work at the site.

According to Andreasen Drive Homeowners Association President Aron Rosenberg, the HOA had provided PG&E with a list of "non-negotiable" requests concerning a second emergency egress, construction of a wall matching that of the neighboring Olympic Oaks development, and holding off on removal of the additional 28 trees at the site.

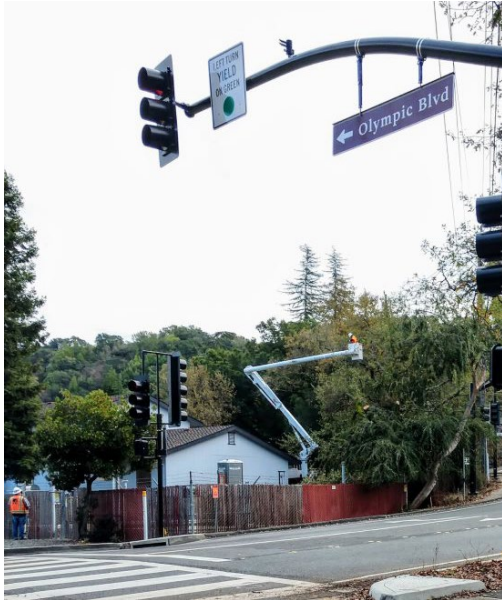
PG&E purchased the adjacent property in order to expand and upgrade the regulator station, which involves removing the old regulator station, building a new regulator station, installing automated valves and installing a receiver for an in-line inspection testing tool. PG&E stated in its Dec. 1 court filing that the upgrades would allow for easier and less invasive testing of the condition and integrity of PG&E's Line 191-B, a major

Dawson sought additional clarification of the situation, since the filing had not only mentioned an anomaly on Line 191-B, but noted the specific location of the anomaly as being "approximately 1,800 feet from Andreassen Drive and the Reliez Station Regulator Station in Lafayette."

"Some Lafayette residents are so concerned," Dawson wrote, "they have taken to measuring the 1,800 feet on either side of the new regulator station to determine the at-risk segment."

Cowsert Chapman asked the project team to re-review the project information and noted the following clarifications about the cited anomaly: "The anomaly is located within Meadowlark Court, near Blackhawk Road; the actual distance from this location to the Reliez Station Road regulator station is approximately 2.5 miles, not 1,800 feet; PG&E operates a distribution regulator station approximately 1,800 feet from the Meadowlark Court location."

According to PG&E spokesperson Tamar Sarkissian, Line 191-B was inspected on Sept. 25. "The anomaly was reported as metal loss by the inspection tool vendor on Nov. 18 and fits PG&E's criteria to investigate further," she said. "The line is safe to operate, but pressure was reduced on Nov. 22 as an immediate and precautionary safety measure until we can investigate further. Future plans are to excavate the site to inspect and repair as needed, currently scheduled for early next year."



Tree work at PG&E's gas regulator station on Olympic Blvd. Photo Greg Fisher

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