

San Leandro
December 14, 2018

Members of the City Council,

As concerned residents and homeowners of District 2 who are active in this City, and as professionals who deal with seismic hazard and risk, we petition the city of San Leandro to make earthquake gas shut-off valve installation mandatory for all buildings (new and existing). We believe that the terms currently under consideration (new construction or alterations exceeding \$10k that affect existing gas lines) are inadequate for preventing significant conflagrations in case of a major (M6.5 and greater) earthquake, which is not an unlikely event in the Bay Area.

The recently published USGS report of the HayWired scenario shows that in the event of a M7 earthquake on the Hayward fault, it could take up to 210 days for water service to be fully restored in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and that only 30% of service could be restored in 7 days. This is much longer than the 72 hours citizens are typically told to prepare for, and it means that for 7 days there might be no water to drink, and no water to put out fires. As we all know, after the great 1906 earthquake, fire ravaged San Francisco, and after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake fires ensued in the Marina district.

We installed an earthquake gas shut-off valve in our house, but we don't want to see our neighborhood go up in flames because many of the residents of San Leandro are uninformed of the hazards. In light of recent discoveries of inadequacy in PG&Es infrastructure and safety culture, the company's reluctance to support such an ordinance (because they believe their staff would be overtaxed) becomes suspicious.

We petition the City to make an ordinance requiring earthquake gas shut-off valves to be installed on all building. If PG&E is unwilling to add staff to manage turning these valves back on after a crisis, city staff or licensed plumbers, even laypeople could be trained and deputized to do so (just as is done with the removal of red tags after earthquakes.) If the expense of installation of the valve seems prohibitive to most homeowners, the City could obtain volume discounts from manufacturers taking advantage of economy of scale. Regardless, the cost of rebuilding a burnt house is far and away more expensive to both homeowner and community than an investment in this simple and effective mechanism.

Sincerely,

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Commissioner of Board of Zoning Adjustments, San Leandro
District 2

