

**CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
**Safety and Enforcement Division**  
**Gas Safety and Reliability Branch**  
**Gas Engineering and Compliance Section**

Incident Investigation Report

**Report Date:** 01/19/2024

**Incident Number:** G 20230821-3588

**Utility:** Southern California Gas      SoCalGas

**Date and Time of the Incident:** 8/20/2023, 8:50:00 PM

**Location of the Incident:** Mission Lakes Blvd & Western Ave  
Desert Hot Springs ,CA  
County: San Bernardino

**Summary of Incident:**

On August 21, 2023, at approximately 1451 hours, SoCalGas' transmission Line 6916 (L6916) experienced a pressure drop and resulted in the activation of automated shut off valves to isolate the affected section of e L6916 in Desert Hot Springs. SED investigation found that Tropical Storm Hilary brought torrential rainfall and gusty winds to San Bernardino County causing widespread flooding and numerous mudslides and resulted in the rupture of SoCalGas L6916. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.

**Casualties:** *Fatalities:* 0    *Injuries:* 0

**Property Damage:** \$10,551,000.

**Utility Facilities involved:**

Pipe Material = Steel, Pipe Size = 16 (inches), MAOP = 812 (psi), Operating Pressure = 468 (psi)

**Witnesses:**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1 Gordon Kuo	CPUC Investigator	N/A
2 [REDACTED]	Pipeline Safety and Complia	(858) 276-9135
3 [REDACTED]	Pipeline Safety and Complia	(978) 719-3485

**Evidence:**

<i>Source</i>	<i>Description</i>
1 [REDACTED]	Initial Form 420 on 8/22/23
2 [REDACTED]	Form 7100.1 on 9/20/23
3 [REDACTED]	Data Request on 8/22/23
4 [REDACTED]	Data Request on 9/20/23
5 [REDACTED]	Data Request on 9/21/23
6 [REDACTED]	Data Request on 12/13/23
7 Gordon Kuo	Photos of the site
8 [REDACTED]	Map and Photos of the site
9 [REDACTED]	Data Response on 1-11-24

**Observations and Findings:**

On August 20, 2023, at approximately 09:05 hours, an Automated Main Line Valves on SoCalGas L6916 were activated and started shutting down near Mission Lakes Blvd & Western Ave, Desert Hot Springs.

On August 21, 2023, at approximately 07:44 hours, SoCalGas crews arrived on site to discover that erosion of a wash due to heavy rain has snapped a section of L6916. There were no fatalities, injuries, or fires reported as the result of this incident. This incident became reportable to both the CPUC and DOT due to SoCalGas' facility damages exceeding \$139,7000 dollars. The DOT incident reporting number is 1376879.

The estimated cost of SoCalGas's property damage and repairs is \$10,500,000. In addition, there was an estimated gas release of 8,500 thousand standard cubic feet that resulted in a cost of \$51,000.

On August 22, 2023, SED received a data response from SoCalGas' representative [REDACTED]. L6916 is a 16-inch steel line, installed on January 1, 1958, located in class 1 location "rural desert area" with a MAOP of 812 psig and a MOP of 770 psig. According to SoCalGas, the stormwater runoff and heavy water flow caused soil erosion and exposed L6916 during Tropical Storm Hilary. L6916 is

equipped with automatic shut-off valves that were activated on August 20, 2023, to isolate the damaged section of L6916.

On August 22, 2023, Gordon Kuo, SED investigator arrived at the scene, met with SoCalGas' representatives, took photos of the damaged section and the general area around L6916. In addition, Mr. Kuo surveyed the general area, observed the devastation and the extensive damage caused by Tropical Storm Hilary, and found that the landscape was eroded. One segment of the gas line was observed to be stuck out of the ground, indicating the rest of the line is still below the wash. One section got exposed, was damaged enough to snap, and bent upwards enough due to the force of water. Furthermore, SED observed heavy damage to the section of the L6916 and large boulders in the wash as the result of the Tropical Storm Hilary that brought torrential rainfall and gusty winds to San Bernardino County resulting in widespread flooding and numerous mudslides.

On September 21, 2023, SED received a data response from SoCalGas' representative [REDACTED]. Since the L6916 was purchased from another company, the Engineering Department did not find any records of an assessment being performed prior to installation to determine if the area was prone to landslide hazards.

On December 13, 2023, SED received another data response from SoCalGas representative [REDACTED]. The area is now susceptible to flash flooding due to the heavy rain from Hurricane Hillary. The line was purchased from Questar Pipeline, on the date of June 01, 2007. The damaged section of L6916 was cut out and a new section was installed and the L6916. On November 3, 2023, L6916 was energized and back in service. After the completion of the repair, SoCalGas performed a post incident leakage survey and found zero gas indication. As for mitigation, the section of L6916 was installed at a higher depth to reduce the likelihood of pipeline getting exposed and damage in the future. The L6916 will also be monitored after heavy storms.

On January 11, 2024, SED received additional data response from SoCalGas representative [REDACTED]. According to [REDACTED], the damaged section of L6916 was cut out and a new section of 1424 feet was installed. The new section consisted of pipe characteristics of 16" and 0.375-inch WT x 52 FBE steel pipe. In addition, [REDACTED] provided SED with the qualification's records of both SoCalGas' employees and its contractors who performed various covered tasks including welding, leakage survey, and pipe coating. SED reviewed the qualifications records and verified to be valid at the time the covered tasks were performed.

SED investigation found that the Tropical Storm Hilary brought torrential rainfall and gusty winds to San Bernardino County causing widespread flooding and numerous mudslides and resulted in the rupture of SoCalGas L6916. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.

**Preliminary Statement of Pertinent General Order, Public Utilities Code Requirements, and/or Federal Requirements:**

None

**Conclusion:**

SED investigation found that the Tropical Storm Hilary brought torrential rainfall and gusty winds to San Bernardino County causing widespread flooding and numerous mudslides and resulted in the rupture of SoCalGas L6916. Therefore, SED did not find any GO 112-F, Reference Title 49 CFR Parts 191 & 192 violations by SoCalGas.