



Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

Energy/Underground Natural Gas Storage: Final Report of the Interagency Task Force on Natural Gas Storage Safety Issued

Arkansas Environmental, Energy, and Water Law Blog

10/19/2016

The Interagency Task Force on Natural Gas Storage Safety issued an October 2016 report titled *Ensuring Safe and Reliable Underground Natural Storage – October 2016 (“Report”)*.

The United States Congress and Obama Administration established an Interagency Task Force (“Task Force”) to analyze California’s Aliso Canyon natural gas leak and make recommendations on how to reduce the likelihood of future leaks from underground natural gas storage facilities.

The United States is estimated to have over 400 natural gas storage facilities. The purpose of such facilities is to deliver gas at times of high demand to residential, commercial, and industrial customers.

Co-chairs of the Task Force included the Under Secretary for Science and Energy for the Department of Energy and Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. The Task Force held three national-level workshops and is stated to have met with:

- Community members
- Energy representatives
- Environmental organizations
- State officials

Three working groups were established for research and analysis which included:

- Physical Integrity of Wells of Gas Storage Facilities
- Reliability of Natural Gas Supplies from Gas Storage Facilities
- The Public Health and Environmental Impacts Associated with the Aliso Canyon Leak

The *Report* includes 40 recommendations that are stated to “identify the need for additional actions at our Nation’s natural gas storage facilities to ensure their long-term safety and reliable operations.”

Described as key recommendations are:

- Gas storage operators should begin a rigorous evaluation program to baseline the status of their wells, establish risk management planning and, in most cases, phase-out old wells with a single-point-of-failure designs
- Advance preparation for possible natural gas leaks and coordinate emergency response in the case of a leak can help manage and mitigate potential health and environmental impacts of leak when they do occur

- Power system planners and operators need to better understand the risks that potential gas storage disruption creates for the electric system

Besides the Task Force recommendations, the Report includes detailed chapters analyzing both gas storage and the Aliso Canyon incident.

A link to the 91-page *Report* can be found [here](#).