



April 25, 2022

Manuel Ramirez, Chair and Members of the
San Mateo County Planning Commission
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Item #5 on the April 27, 2022 Agenda: PLN2018-00057 (Buck's Butane/Amerigas) Coastal Development Permit to legalize unpermitted development at an existing propane storage and distribution facility at 399 Airport Street, Moss Beach

Dear Chair Ramirez and Commissioners,

On behalf of Green Foothills, I write to urge **you to deny the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the above-referenced project**. The Amerigas facility has been operating without benefit of the required Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for decades.

This unattended facility is located adjacent to 227 low income families living at the Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Community as well as the Big Wave project's 57 units of housing for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults that recently broke ground and will be constructed over the next two years or so. Both Pillar Ridge and Big Wave are considered sensitive receptors.

The "M-1" District (Light Industrial) zoning provides that: "no use shall be carried on in a manner that is, in the opinion of the Planning Commission, objectionable from the standpoint of odor, dust, smoke, gas, noise or vibration."

As noted in the Staff Report, members of the public and neighbors have raised objections to the operation of this unpermitted facility for years. This is an environmental justice issue and we urge denial of the CDP in order to assure the safety and well-being of the Pillar Ridge and Big Wave neighbors.

Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Lennie Roberts, Legislative Advocate

From: [Dave Olson](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#); [Summer Burlison](#)
Cc: [Janneth Lujan](#)
Subject: PLN2018-00057 Midcoast Community Council Comments on Buck's Butane-Propane CDP
Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 10:27:02 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of San Mateo County. Unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe, do not click links, open attachments or reply.

After reading the staff report for this item, prepared for the April 27th, 2022 meeting of the Planning Commission, we do not feel that the conditions and comments in the staff report address the concerns of the MCC, nor of the community, most especially those of the immediately adjacent residents of the Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Community.

Our concerns are expressed in our two letters, included in the staff report, and in more detail, with slides, on our website:
<https://midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/propane-facility-airport-st>

Please do not approve the requested Coastal Development Permit for this project.

Thank you,

Dave Olson
Midcoast Community Council
daveolsonmcc@gmail.com
650.387.3618 (cell)
<http://www.midcoastcommunitycouncil.org/>

Saturday, April 23, 2022
Tamez Family
Moss Beach, CA

TO: Planning Commission,
San Mateo County
Re: Planning Commission Hearing-Agenda For 04/27/2022-Item 5

There is great concern for the safety of the residents here at Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Community which abuts the Bucks Butane yard. Back in 2017 I was preparing to work in my backyard when I heard a loud bang. Within a minute, I detected the very strong odor of propane gas. Rushing to the back yard, I climbed up my ladder and took photos of a large propane tank that was pouring out it's contents. The wind was carrying it northward right over residential homes. I ran out of the house to warn people to evacuate their homes and saw Mrs Emerita Arellano holding her infant boy and running with her other toddler son away from her home which was directly in the path of the gas cloud. They and many others who lived downwind from that cloud were also running and screaming. As a person with acute asthma, I had to cover my face with my shirt but was still coughing with my eyes watering as were many others. I'm describing what occurred that day for you folks at the Planning Commission who may not be aware of what happened. The residents at Pillar Ridge, with homes that sit six to twelve feet from the Bucks Propane fence are living in fear because of that incident. Buck's Propane Gas has always vented their tanks which cause a horrible odor that drives us inside. Please look at the photo I took so you can see for yourselves how furious the leaking propane swept over our community. Please do not allow this gas company to renew activities that could very well cause further damage and bring law suits. Thank you all for hearing our concerns.

Mr. & Mrs Joseph Tamez
Residents since 1996



From: [Pillar Ridge](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Planning Commission April 27 Hearing
Date: Monday, April 25, 2022 3:06:32 PM
Attachments: [2017-10-25-AmeriGas-hmbreview.pdf](#)

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Re: Agenda item 5 (PLN20108-00057)

Two items of concern with the plan:

1. security fencing
2. resume used tank storage

Security fencing: This 8' foot chain link fence is falling over at some locations. Originally installed without permit & not in a workmanship like manner. Around the fence is weed overgrowth, graffiti and dumping which is not managed by Amerigas. See photos attached.

Resume used tank storage: Proposed resumption of used tank storage will create safety hazards to the nearby community of over 1000 souls. "Used" tanks are stored because they are not serviceable (unsafe, leaking, etc.). These tanks are also "de-valved" periodically which, in addition to tank leaks/failures, results in uncontrolled mercaptan release and "false alarm" gas leak reports.

Adjacent to the propane yard are families living in the Pillar Ridge community who have been directly impacted by both the environmental side effects of uncontrolled mercaptan release/exposures and the routine creation of unannounced hazardous circumstances caused by these uncontrolled leaks from Amerigas. Residents have complained of sore throat and breathing difficulties resulting from the strong mercaptan odors coming from the propane yard. However, most serious is that the stored tanks set in motion a "perfect storm" of compounding errors that could result in loss of life and property.

"False alarm" gas leak reports were common until the local community became accustomed to the odors of mercaptan from the Amerigas yard. Leaks and de-valving occurred frequently enough that residents STOPPED REPORTING GENUINE GAS LEAKS to PG&E and the Park!

Permitting a 15,000 gallon storage tank that has already had an uncontrolled venting/leak event to remain on site, even though it no longer services the Park as originally intended, is bad enough. When this 15,000 gallon dedicated tank was disconnected/deprecated from servicing the Park, was its permit for use under alternate circumstances ever disclosed and permitted?

Be aware that permitting used tank storage will result, again, in a perfect storm for a fire/explosion event when either our local PG&E gas system or any home has a genuine gas leak that needs immediate attention. Practically speaking, what do you think will happen if there is an actual gas leak at Pillar Ridge? Nothing, because everyone will think "Oh, it's just the propane yard next door." This is not speculation. This has already happened.

We've been there and done that and it is unsafe by any metric. In the past, my attempts to get

cooperation from Amerigas on this issue have been fruitless. Despite verbal assurances, I (property manager at the Pillar Ridge Manufactured Housing Community) was never notified by Amerigas operators of planned de-valving operations. Notwithstanding, had we been notified, it (and the leaking tanks) would have continued to confuse residents about the true nature of the gas leak odors. Neither should it be my job, nor should the burden fall to residents, to manage and suffer from the fallout of Amerigas' operations on a neighboring parcel.

Despite our prior complaints and explanations to the County, it appears the current staff report has fully misapprehended the severity of the hazards posed by Amerigas operations to the lives and property of local residents. It is ill advised that any agency would consider undermining the safety of the local community by allowing any gas operator to store extra/used LP tanks that are de-valved and/or unserviceable, so close to families and homes.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments & please refer to the attached HMB Review article.

-Regards,
Paul Bowman, Pillar Ridge M.H.C. resident manager
1-650-728-3389



SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

April 25, 2022

Planning Commission
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Email: planning_commission@smcgov.org
Janneth Lujan, Planning Commission Secretary
Email: jlujan@smcgov.org

Re: Item #5 on the April 27, 2022 Agenda: PLN2018-00057 (Buck's Butane/AmeriGas) Coastal Development Permit to legalize unpermitted development

Dear Chair Manuel Ramirez and Commissioners,

In furtherance of the Sierra Club's Environmental Justice policy and of our ongoing support for the California Coastal Act/San Mateo County Local Coastal Program we urge the San Mateo County Planning Commission to **deny** the after-the-fact Coastal Development Permit (PLN 2018-00057) for the unpermitted past expansions as well as newly proposed additions to the propane distribution center located on the west side of Airport Boulevard **in proximity to the Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Park**. The residents of Pillar Ridge are just as entitled to the environmental protections of a rigorous coastal development permitting system as are residents throughout the California Coastal Zone.

There are historical reasons - the leaks in 2017 as one major example - for the Pillar Ridge residents and the planning commissioners to be doubtful about mere promises of better behavior. Given these past incidents of public health endangerment it would be right and proper that the operator at minimum be constrained to the parameters of the existing permit or, better yet, required to relocate to an area well separated from family dwellings.

Sometimes denial is the best tool to encourage better decisions and this application is in need of that tool to be applied for the wellbeing of the residents of the Pillar Ridge Manufactured Home Park as well as the future residents of the special needs housing development (Big Wave Wellness Center) as permitted by San Mateo County next door to this applicant.

We appreciate the Planning Commission's past attention to our public input, and we are hopeful that you will find this comment to be of assistance to your decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Ferreira". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mike Ferreira
Coastal Issues Committee
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Cc: James Eggers
Executive Director
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Cc: Gladwyn d'Souza
Conservation Committee Chair
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Manuel Ramirez, Chair and
Members of the San Mateo Planning Commission
455 County Center, 2nd Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

April 26, 2022

Re: Item #5 on the April 27, 2022 Agenda: PLN2018-00057 (Buck's Butane/Amerigas) Coastal Development Permit to legalize unpermitted development at an existing propane storage and distribution facility a 399 Airport Street, Moss Beach

Dear Chair Ramirez and Commissioners:

I am the project engineer for the Big Wave Project. I have very strong objections to permitting a Butane storage and distribution facility in its current location next to the Pillar Ridge residential community and next our proposed housing for our special needs community. It is my understanding that this location was historic and existed in this location prior to the development of the Pillar Ridge neighborhood and it should not be permitted for the following reasons:

1. Storage of large volumes (10,000 gallons) of propane/butane is extremely hazardous, especially in uncontained facilities in residential neighborhoods.
2. The routine of filling propane/butane releases large quantities of gas and liquid. This causes high levels of local pollution and odor that will impact our sensitive community that is directly downwind of this operation.
3. The Coastside community does not need the distribution of propane which in archaic form of energy distribution. The majority of propane services on the Coastside have been replaced by natural gas distribution lines. The few remaining are serviced by another propane dealer located in a remote area. Current global warming goals are to replace fossil fuels and not issue new permits for facilities with a low level on need in a hazardous location.

As an engineering geologist, I have had personal experience with a butane explosion and fire at a Midwest oil refinery. The fire resulted in the loss of life and property. It is a terrifying experience. Propane when released in quantity flows like boiling water downhill in search of an ignition source. The existing 10,000- gallon tank is in a very corrosive and salty environment. The transfer pipe is rusting and does not appear to have any form of emergency closure. The tank does not appear to be adequately strapped to its foundation. The foundation does not appear to be designed for recent seismic technology. The site is uncontained, and a liquid leak will immediately flow off site. The tank bouncing off the foundation or the failure of the transfer pipe due to corrosion or damage could drain the tank. Liquid propane flowing downhill into the Pillar Ridge neighborhood, or our project may cause most of the homes to burn.

One of my first acts as Public Works Director in Pacifica was to get rid of a 500-gallon propane tank for an emergency generator because corrosion and failure could cause it to drain into the storm drain in Linda Mar resulting in an uncontrollable neighborhood fire.

The hazards and pollution caused by these facilities used to be ignored because the need for this type of fuel was greater and the locations of these facilities were more isolated. There is no longer a need for this type of facility. It seems unreasonable to permit a facility given the current emphasis on fire protection, life and safety, earthquake protection, concern for global warming and code compliance.

I urge the Planning Commission to deny the Coastal Permit for the above-described project because it is extremely hazardous, poorly located and poorly designed. It will be out of compliance with the zoning and the requirements of the Bay Area Air Pollution as soon as it is put back into operation.

Sincerely, Scott Holmes