An ordinance adding Division 15, Methane Seepage District Regulations, to Article 1 of Chapter IX of the Los Angeles Municipal Code, establishing a High Potential Methane zone and a Potential Methane zone associated with the Fairfax area of the City of Los Angeles.

WHEREAS, a hazard may exist from natural flammable gas intrusion into buildings from subsurface sources in the Fairfax area of the City of Los Angeles and, in order to reduce any potential of fire or explosion from flammable gas concentration in buildings, minimum requirements should be established,

NOW, THEREFORE,

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Division 15, Methane Seepage District Regulation is hereby added to Article 1 of Chapter IX the Los Angeles Municipal Code to read as follows:

DIVISION 15

METHANE SEEPAGE DISTRICT REGULATIONS.

SEC. 91.1501. PURPOSE:

This Division sets forth the minimum requirements of the City of Los Angeles for control of methane intrusion emanating from
geologic formations. The requirements do not regulate flammable vapor that may originate in and propagate from other sources which include, but are not limited to, ruptured hazardous material transmission lines, underground atmospheric tanks, or similar installations.

SEC. 91.1502. DEFINITIONS:

For purposes of this Division, certain words and phrases are defined as follows:

"Adequate ventilation" shall mean the mechanical ventilation of a structure corresponding to a minimum of four (4) air changes per hour.

"Flammable gas" shall mean any gaseous substance capable of sustaining combustion or explosion.

"Gas detection system" shall mean one or more electrical devices capable of continuous monitoring for the presence of flammable gas and containing an audible alarm capable of alerting occupants that a hazardous atmosphere exists. The system and any device which is part of the system shall be subject to Department of Building and Safety and Fire Department approval.
"Multiple-residential" shall mean a use occupancy by more than two (2) families.

"Qualified engineer" shall mean a civil engineer currently registered in the State of California and possessing experience in the design of subsurface gas control systems.

"Single-family" shall mean a use occupancy by two (2) families or less.

"Vent system" shall mean a series of perforated pipes composed of acceptable materials, suitably designed and installed above the water table to collect and disperse flammable gas.

SEC. 91.1503. BOUNDARIES:

Boundaries of zones set forth herein are measured from center line to center line of named streets unless otherwise described, and are more specifically designated graphically by the copy of map designated Plate 4 attached to Council File No. 85-0563-S3, the original of which map is on file with the Department of Building and Safety of the City. East, south, north, west and similar directions are general only.

(a) The High Potential Methane Zone

Boundaries are as follows:
Detroit Street south from Third Street to
Fourth Street, west to La Brea Avenue, south
to Sixth Street, west to Detroit Street,
south to Wilshire Boulevard, west to
Cloverdale Avenue, south to Olympic
Boulevard, west to Stanley Avenue, north to
Eighth Street, west to San Diego Way, north
to Warner Drive, west to McCarthy Vista,
north to Wilshire Boulevard, west to
La Jolla Avenue, north to Orange Street,
west to Sweetzer Avenue, north to Blackburn
Avenue, east to La Jolla Avenue, north to
First Street, east to Fairfax Avenue,
southeast on a line to a point 250 feet
north of Third Street and approximately 250
west of the center line of Gardner Avenue,
south to Third Street, and east to Detroit
Street.

(b) The Potential Methane Zone
boundaries are as follows:

Rossmore Avenue south from Melrose
Avenue to Eighth Street, west to
La Brea Avenue, south to Olympic
Boulevard, west to San Vicente
Boulevard, northwest along San Vicente
Boulevard to Third Street, west to
Robertson Boulevard, north to Beverly Boulevard, east to La Cienega Boulevard, north to Oakwood Avenue, east to La Brea Avenue, north to Melrose Avenue, and east to Rossmore Avenue.

SEC. 91.1504. EXISTING CONSTRUCTION:

(a) High Potential Methane Zone

1. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings with basements or first floors shall have adequate ventilation or shall have a gas detection system installed in those areas.

2. Paved areas over 5,000 square feet and within 15 feet of the exterior wall of commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings shall be vented.

3. All single-family dwellings with basements shall have a gas detection system installed and maintained in good working condition.

(b) Potential Methane Zone

1. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential
buildings with basements or first floors shall have adequate ventilation or shall have a gas detection system installed in those areas.

2. When gas is detected on a site, paved areas over 5,000 square feet and within 15 feet of the exterior wall of commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings shall be vented.

3. All single-family dwellings with basements shall have a gas detection system installed and maintained in good working condition.

(c) Any building located within both the High Potential Methane Zone and the Potential Methane Zone shall comply with the more restrictive provisions of the High Potential Methane Zone.

SEC. 91.1505. PROPOSED NEW CONSTRUCTION:

(a) High Potential Methane Zone

1. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings shall be shielded between the building and the earth by a sealing layer of plastic sheeting composed of oil resistant
materials acceptable to the Department of Building and Safety.

2. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings over 50 feet in width shall be provided with an approved vent system located under the shielding to provide venting to areas outside the perimeter of the building.

3. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings with basements or first floors shall have adequate ventilation or shall have a gas detection system installed in those areas.

4. Paved areas over 5,000 square feet within 15 feet of the exterior wall of commercial, industrial, institutional or multiple residential buildings shall be vented.

5. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings covering over 50,000 square feet of lot area or with more than one level of basement shall be independently analyzed by a qualified engineer, hired by the building owner. The engineer shall investigate and
recommend mitigating measures which will prevent or retard potential methane gas seepage into the building. In addition to the other items required in this Section, the owner shall cause the engineer's design recommendations to be implemented subject to Building and Safety Department and Fire Department approval.

6. All single-family dwellings with concrete slab floors shall be shielded between the building and the earth by a sealing layer of plastic sheeting composed of oil resistant materials acceptable to the Department of Building and Safety. An approved venting system shall be provided under the shielding to provide venting to areas outside the perimeter of the building.

7. All single-family dwellings with basements shall have a gas detection system installed and maintained in good working condition.

8. Proposed swimming pools shall be permitted only where it can be demonstrated through engineering geologic studies that the pool shell will be located above the high oil and ground water levels for this area.
(b) Potential Methane Zone

1. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings shall be shielded between the building and the earth by a sealing layer of plastic sheeting composed of oil resistant materials acceptable to the Department of Building and Safety.

2. When gas is detected during soil exploration or foundation preparation, all commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings over 50 feet in width shall be provided with an approved vent system located under the shielding to provide venting to areas outside the perimeter of the building.

3. A gas detection system shall be installed and maintained in good working condition in basements without adequate ventilation in all commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings.

4. When gas is detected during soil exploration or site preparation, paved areas over 5,000 square feet within 15 feet of the exterior wall of commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential
buildings shall be vented.

5. All commercial, industrial, institutional, or multiple residential buildings covering over 50,000 square feet of lot area or with more than one level of basement shall be independently analyzed by a qualified engineer, hired by the building owner. The engineer shall investigate and recommend mitigating measures which will prevent or retard potential methane gas seepage into the building. In addition to the other items listed in this Section, the owner shall cause the engineer's design recommendations to be implemented subject to Building and Safety Department and Fire Department approval.

6. All single-family dwellings with basements shall have a gas detection system installed and maintained in good working condition.

(c) Any building located within both the High Potential Methane Zone and the Potential Methane Zone shall comply with the more restrictive provisions of the High Potential Methane Zone.
SEC. 91.1506. GAS DETECTION SYSTEM:

    Testing, Maintenance and Service -- The
testing, maintenance, and service procedure for
each gas detection system shall be performed in
accordance with the manufacturer's current
written instructions. These instructions shall
be approved and on file with the Fire
Department. Testing and service shall be
performed by a person approved by the Fire
Department. Notwithstanding the manufacturer's
instructions regarding frequency of the testing
and service procedure, testing and service of
each system shall be performed at least once
annually.

SEC. 91.1507. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

    With the exception of single-family
dwellings, all buildings required by this
Division to have a gas detection system or vent
system shall, subject to Fire Department
approval, have established emergency procedures
which include, but are not limited to, the
following:

    (a) Assignment of a responsible person
as Safety Director to work with the Fire
Department in the establishment,
implementation, and maintenance of an
emergency plan.

(b) Conspicuous posting of the Fire Department's telephone number in areas designated by the Fire Department.

(c) Conspicuous posting of emergency plan procedures approved by the Fire Department.

SEC. 91.1508. APPLICATION OF METHANE SEEPAGE DISTRICT REGULATIONS TO LOCATIONS OR AREAS OUTSIDE THE SEC. 91.1503 BOUNDARIES:

Upon a determination by the Department of Building and Safety that a hazard may exist from methane intrusion at a geographical location or in an area outside the boundaries established in Sec. 91.1503, the Department of Building and Safety and the Fire Department may enforce any or all of the requirements of Division 15 as required to preclude potential fire or explosion from methane concentration.

SEC. 91.1509. ADDITIONAL REMEDIAL MEASURES:

(a) In the event the concentration of methane gas in any building located in the High Potential Methane Zone or in the Methane Potential Zone is at or near 25% above the minimum concentration of gas that will form an
ignitable mixture with air at ambient temperature
and pressure, the owner shall hire a qualified
designee to investigate, recommend and implement
mitigating measures. Such measures shall be
subject to approval of the Building and Safety
Department and Fire Department.

(b) Any abandoned oil well encountered
during construction shall be evaluated by the
Fire Department and may be required to be
reabandoned in accordance with applicable rules
and regulations of the Division of Oil and Gas of
the State of California.

Sec. 2. Subsection A of Section 57.01.35 of the
Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended by adding a new
Subdivision 12 to read as follows:

12. Gas detection system.

Sec. 3. Article 1 of Chapter IX of the Los Angeles
Municipal Code is hereby amended to add a new exception
numbered 6 to those Exceptions enumerated under Section 91.0203
to read as follows:

6. The Department shall have the authority
to withhold permits on projects located within a
High Potential Methane Zone or Potential Methane
Zone established under Section 91.1501 et seq. of
this Code. Permits may be issued upon submittal
of detailed plans that show adequate protection against flammable gas incursion can be provided by the installation of suitable gas control systems.
Sec. 4. The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and cause the same to be published in some daily newspaper printed and published in the City of Los Angeles.

I hereby certify that the foregoing ordinance was passed by the Council of the City of Los Angeles, at its meeting of JUL 18 1986.

ELIAS MARTINEZ, City Clerk,

JUL 29 1986

Approved

JUL 29 1986

Approved as to Form and Legality

JAMES K. HAHN, City Attorney,

By ROGER H. HOLT, Assistant City Attorney

File No. 85-0563-83 * S4

City Clerk Form 23