

MOTION

Below-ground storage tanks for natural gas or other volatile substances are located throughout the City of Los Angeles. These tanks can pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the residents of the City, as exemplified by the Aliso Canyon natural gas leak, where massive amounts of methane gas were released into the atmosphere over months before the leak was contained. The State is responsible for the regulation of these tanks. However, when one of these tanks fails, the City bears the burden of managing significant parts of the cleanup and relocation of residents, not to mention the environmental and health impacts caused by a leak. Further, State regulation of below-ground storage is fragmented, with no one department or agency fully responsible for safety inspections or for issuing operations permits.

As the City and its residents are at the highest risk of harm when one of these facilities fails, the City should be more active in the regulation of below-ground storage facilities. While the Aliso Canyon disaster is the most prominent example, other underground storage facilities for various other hazardous materials exist. The Fire Department is responsible for regulating various other types of hazardous material storage facilities, and may have a role to play in the regulation of below-ground facilities as they already do with above ground facilities. The City offices and departments most engaged in dealing with hazardous material storage and coordinating the City's response in case of an emergency at one of these facilities should report on what role the City has, or should have, in the regulation and inspection of below-ground storage facilities.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department, with the assistance of the Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety, the Emergency Management Department and the City Attorney's Office be requested to report on what ability and authority the City should have to regulate and inspect below-ground storage facilities for natural gas and other hazardous materials, and on what actions the City can take to ensure that it has the authority for permitting and inspecting these facilities. These regulations can be formed under the franchise agreement structure.

PRESENTED BY: 
MITCHELL ENGLANDER
Councilmember, 12th District

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SECONDED BY: 

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