

From: Cherry, Brian K
Sent: 10/28/2011 9:38:18 AM
To: 'paul.clanon@cpuc.ca.gov' (paul.clanon@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: RE: Letter to San Bruno Patch

Nice comments.

From: Clanon, Paul [mailto:paul.clanon@cpuc.ca.gov]
Sent: Friday, October 28, 2011 08:50 AM
To: Cherry, Brian K
Subject: Letter to San Bruno Patch

Submitting this letter to the editor today:

Editor -

Your Oct. 26th article on PG&E's recent gas pipeline water testing near Bakersfield got the nature of the incident completely wrong and misled your readers on actions ordered by the California Public Utilities Commission to ensure pipeline safety. The CPUC has directed utilities to test or replace all natural gas transmission pipelines that were grandfathered in under Federal rules and were never pressure tested. As ordered by the CPUC, PG&E was water-testing a one-mile section of natural gas pipeline near Bakersfield when a six-foot segment opened up and released water into a farmer's field. There was no "explosion" or "blast," as claimed repeatedly in your story. PG&E replaced the segment and three days later retested the entire mile-long section. No water leaked. That's a successful test and a future accident that won't happen. PG&E's crew can now move to another section and ensure its safety too.

The article also inaccurately asserts that "many" are comparing the Bakersfield test incident to the San Bruno explosion. No pipeline expert has done any such thing, in the Patch's story or anywhere else.

The pressure tests ordered by the CPUC are controlled tests under the supervision of safety experts. They're designed to test the safety of gas pipelines at a pressure level far in excess of the pipeline's normal operating pressure. The CPUC ordered these tests precisely to ensure pipeline safety throughout California so that we avoid another tragedy. The people of San Bruno more than anyone else have a right to the facts, and your story failed them.

Paul Clanon
Executive Director, California Public Utilities Commission