



**Southern California air regulators are poised to order a utility
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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Southern California air regulators face a simple decision Saturday over a 12-week-old gas leak that has plagued Los Angeles residents and driven thousands from their homes.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District is expected to order a utility to stop the leak — something the company has already agreed to and has been aggressively trying to plug.

The district has already brokered the agreement with Southern California Gas Co. to stop the leak, trap and burn off leaking methane, reduce gas in its massive storage field, monitor emissions and pay for a study on health effects.

But district board members can only approve the order after public comment and a hearing last weekend had to be continued because of the large turnout. About 300 people packed the forum at a Granada Hills school, with about a quarter of those speaking out — many venting about the company and regulators.

Many residents want the board to go further and order the shutdown of the Aliso Canyon storage field, the largest facility of its kind West of the Mississippi River.

Residents of Porter Ranch have complained about nausea, headaches, nosebleeds and other symptoms that have persisted since the leak was reported Oct. 23.

Gov. Jerry Brown has declared an emergency. Some environmentalists are calling the leak the worst disaster since the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010 for spewing climate-changing methane.

The company is under orders to pay to relocate about 4,500 families until the problem is fixed, which is not expected until March.

The air district has also issued a violation order that could carry a hefty fine for the company, but it won't determine the penalty until the leak is stopped.