

City Council Candidate, Molly Basler, Rally's Residents on Earth Day to Stop Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Earth Day, local residents mobilized to block the Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project and the nearby SoCal Gas plant. Some residents are concerned that a complete restoration would affect the wildlife in the area. Residents also want the state to shut down the SoCal Gas Facility in Playa Del Rey, which they say is endangering homes and ecosystems. The location, according to SoCal Gas, has been critical in meeting market demand for electricity.

[Molly Basler](#) is dedicated to preserving the few remaining coastal wetlands in California. "I just feel so compelled to protect it, like a mother," she said.



Molly Basler

Basler and others protested the state's Ballona Wetlands Restoration Project on the side of the road on Earth Day. She is concerned that it will do more harm than good. Basler is an environmentalist and the initiative leader for Climate Reality. He is also running for Los Angeles City Council District 5 when Council Member Paul Koretz's term expires in 2022.

"There's a lot of things that need to be changed, but it can be done gently without bulldozing, without rehoming all the animals," Basler said.

Basler is one of almost 11,000 people who have signed a petition opposing the state's restoration efforts. She is a member of Defend Ballona Wetlands, an organization that is taking the project to court.

"We have a gentle restoration idea that people can come out and clean up the trash that has been strewn about," she said.

According to the community, the state's initiative is driven by bond funds and private interests, including the opportunity for SoCal Gas to improve its aging infrastructure underneath the wetlands.

"It's just a matter of time. This is another Aliso Canyon," Basler said.

In 2015, the biggest natural gas leak in US history occurred in Aliso Canyon. Basler pointed to a spot in the wetlands where bubbles emerged on the water's surface, which she and others believe is evidence of methane gas released from a nearby storage facility. The Los Angeles City Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution earlier this month asking the state to shut it down.

"If this goes, it's not just going to be the close neighbors. It's going to be all over," Baslere said, pointing to nearby homes and LAX.

SoCal Gas spokeswoman Patrice Clayton in a statement to Inside the Issues said, "The Playa del Rey storage facility supports the integration of renewable energy like solar and wind during unfavorable weather conditions, keeps customer bills affordable by allowing our region to buy and store natural gas when prices are low, and promotes a diverse energy mix."

When rolling blackouts were ordered last summer, she said, "During the peak electric demand era, hourly gas consumption was higher than the amount delivered into Southern California. Our natural gas storage fields, like Playa del Rey, were critical in bridging the gap and keeping power plants running."

However, Basler believes that the storage field's elevation is actually too high for it to remain accessible.

"Why don't they close down the ones that are the most dangerous?" Basler said.

So, whether residents visit The Ballona Wetlands for bird watching or to soak up the natural scenery like Basler, they provide a temporary and special escape that they believe is well worth defending.

"I just get relaxed driving through the wetlands," concludes Basler.

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