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PRESS RELEASE

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**CPUC CONSIDERS NEW APPROACHES TO REDUCING
METHANE LEAKS FROM NATURAL GAS FACILITIES**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 18, 2015 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) today released a staff report that identifies best practices and new technologies in natural gas leak detection as part of California's pioneering efforts to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050. Natural gas is primarily comprised of methane, a potent contributor to climate change that produces 34 times the warming impact than the same amount of carbon dioxide.

The report, titled, "Survey of Natural Gas Leakage Abatement Best Practices," identifies technologies and operational best practices currently in use in the state and those employed in other states but not yet adopted in California. The report also looks ahead to ideas and practices in various stages of research and development that may help gas utilities reduce natural gas leaks in the future.

A key finding of the report is that, for the purposes of reducing GHG emissions that contribute to global climate change, any and all methane leaks may be considered hazardous to life, property, or the environment. This conclusion could impact how utilities and other gas companies prioritize their efforts to eliminate gas leaks. Further, although there are costs associated with a more assertive approach to reducing gas leaks, the report finds that the economic benefits may be greater than the increased costs. As stated in the report, reducing methane emissions may be a win-win, resulting in an improved environment and a reduction in costs to consumers related to avoided GHG emissions and the monetary value of the leaked gas.

The CPUC is seeking comment on the report from gas utilities and other stakeholders as part of the



proceeding it opened to investigate best practices and new technologies in gas leak detection. The proceeding seeks to minimize methane leaks on the intrastate gas system. As part of the proceeding, which was opened in compliance with Senate Bill 1371 (Leno, 2014), the CPUC will consult with the California Air Resources Board and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to implement policies for improved methods of measuring and controlling gas leaks. The report will be the subject of a public workshop to be held at the CPUC in San Francisco on Monday, April 6, 2015.

The report is available at: www.cpuc.ca.gov/PUC/safety/Risk_Assessment.htm.

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