



March 27, 2014

NOTIFICATION OF PG&E PIPELINE PATHWAYS PROJECT - TREE REMOVAL CONCERNS AND REQUIREMENTS

Dear Property Owner/Resident:

The City of Martinez was recently informed that property owners within certain areas of the City have been or will be contacted by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) to discuss removal and/or pruning of trees on both public and private property. This is part of a project that PG&E is calling the "Pipeline Pathways" program.

You may be notified by PG&E that they intend to remove or prune trees located on private property owned by you. You can contact PG&E at 1-877-259-8314 to obtain further information about how the Pipeline Pathways program may affect your property.

We are contacting you to let you know about the City's concerns regarding the Pipeline Pathways program and to advise you to investigate your rights and responsibilities relating to the project and your property. The City has informed PG&E that while the City is focused on ensuring public safety and encourages pro-active measures by PG&E to specifically address pipeline safety, the City is concerned with the proposal for widespread and possibly unnecessary tree removal within both the public right-of-way and on private property.

The question of whether PG&E may have a right to remove vegetation or structures on private property is a question of the rights granted by PG&E's specific easements and California property law. The City encourages you to request that PG&E provide you proof of their purported legal right to remove trees on private property and that you investigate your personal property rights as it relates to this project. In addition, the City wants to advise you of your responsibility to ensure that any tree removal on your private property by PG&E and/or its contractors is done in accordance with the requirements of the City's tree removal regulations.

As you may or may not be aware, the City has certain permit requirements for tree removal. Martinez Municipal Code Chapter 8.12; *Trees on Private Property – Preservation, Protection and Removal* defines all indigenous trees (i.e. trees native to Martinez area) with a circumference of 20 inches, or larger - approximately 6½ inches in diameter - as "protected." Section 8.12.020 states that no person shall remove any protected tree on private property within the City without a "Tree Permit". Thus, in most cases where removal of a protected tree is proposed, the property owner (or his/her authorized agent) must file an application for tree removal with the Community Development Department not less than 10 days prior to proposed tree removal.

Violations of the City's *Trees on Private Property* regulations, including the removal of a tree without the required permit, may be subject to citations, fines, and possible civil or criminal proceedings.

Obtaining the required permit for tree removal is ultimately the property owner's responsibility. If you are contacted by PG&E regarding removal of any trees on your property, we strongly recommend contacting the City Community Development Department so that we can review any applicable permit requirements with you to ensure that unauthorized tree removal does not occur. Please contact Dina Tasini at 925-372-3563 or by email at DTasini@cityofmartinez.org if you have any questions or need any further information.

Sincerely



Anna Gwyn Simpson
City Manager