

Clean-Building Rules Save Money While Preventing Smog and Reducing Greenhouse Gases

Did you know?

In July 2019, the City of Berkeley became the first city in the state to ban new gas connections in low-rise homes. Across California, other cities including Los Angeles are exploring how similar **clean-building rules can make our communities cleaner, safer, and affordable.**

Why?

Because using natural gas in our homes (for heat, hot water, ovens, and stoves) contributes to smog and climate change. Energy use in buildings accounts for about 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in California. **Fortunately, our electricity is getting cleaner as we move toward solar and wind power; and these sources of energy are now cheaper than fossil fuels.**

As the price of gas continues to rise (*and it is rising*), **it is crucial that we develop an equitable transition strategy, so that all of our communities can benefit** as we move toward a cleaner, safer, and more affordable future.

Decarbonized buildings, which run on clean electricity, are:

- **Cleaner:** Energy use in buildings accounts for about 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in California. We must move away from fossil fuels such as natural gas to make the necessary reductions for the state will meet its climate goals (and—oh yeah—help save the planet). Gas stoves also emit toxins such as nitrogen dioxide, a notoriously hazardous gas that induces asthma and other respiratory ailments.
- **Safer:** Induction cooktops have even better temperature control than gas stoves and are safer to use because only the pan gets hot, not the stove. At the same time, they eliminate the risk of gas leaks, explosions, and fires, all of which are of particular concern in earthquake-prone areas such as Los Angeles.
- **More Affordable:** A study commissioned by the California Energy Commission showed that building electrification will save the state billions of dollars compared to dirtier alternatives such as biogas (sometimes called renewable natural gas). A study commissioned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has similarly shown that requiring new low-rise residential buildings to use highly efficient zero-emissions appliances will save new homeowners hundreds of dollars per year!

Choices we make now can cost us a lot of money down the road:

- *every new building that uses gas appliances...*
- *every new off-street parking spot without a plan for adding an EV charger...*
- *every new power plant that uses fossil fuel...*

—will waste us money later!

What can neighborhood councils do?

1. Ask developers and the City to plan for the future by requiring new buildings to be ready for all-electric appliances and all-electric cars
2. Support a strong, equitable building-electrification ordinance that offers financial incentives to help people in existing buildings transition to electric appliances
3. Help get the word out to your community about the coming changes

Want to learn more? Visit nca.la/advocacy.

<https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2019/06/study-transitioning-california-gas-could-lower-costs-and-prioritize-low-income>
<https://www.ladwpnews.com/meeting-californias-climate-change-goals-through-building-electrification/>

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