



May 18, 2021

Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft  
Vice Mayor Malia Vella  
Councilmember Tony Daysog  
Councilmember John Knox White  
Councilmember Trish Herrera Spencer

RE: Agenda Item 6-B All-Electric New Construction Ordinance

Dear Members of the City Council:

With the adoption of the Climate Emergency Declaration in March 2019, the Alameda City Council recognized the seriousness of the climate crisis.

Natural gas used in buildings accounts for 27 percent of Alameda's citywide greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning away from using natural gas in buildings will also positively impact the health and safety of Alameda residents.

Building on its leadership in adopting the Climate Action and Resiliency Plan in September 2019 and the Resolution Limiting Natural Gas Infrastructure in November 2019, we strongly encourage the City Council to adopt the All-Electric New Construction Ordinance.

This action will help to keep Alameda on the Climate Safe Path.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debi Ryan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debi" and last name "Ryan" clearly distinguishable.

Debi Ryan, Steering Committee  
Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda



May 18, 2021

**RE: Agenda Item 6B**

Dear Mayor Ashcraft and City Council Members,

The Sierra Club supports the adoption of an ordinance amending Alameda's building code to require all newly-constructed buildings to be all-electric. We support the ordinance because it is an appropriate and timely response, among other necessary measures, to mitigate the climate, health, safety, and housing affordability crisis across the state.

First, we would like to thank you for your leadership to require all-electric construction on all city-owned properties in 2019. We are excited to learn you are now considering adoption of an all-electric ordinance for all new construction. While we support this ordinance, we urge you to consider removing the five exceptions from the ordinance as it has been proven across the state that all-electric new construction is cost effective. Continuing to build with gas infrastructure will only continue to exacerbate the health and climate impacts.

By adopting this ordinance, the City of Alameda will join a wave of cities and counties across California in declaring that fossil fuels have no place in our homes, commercial buildings, or communities, and that we have a right to clean, safe, and affordable energy. The City of Alameda will not be alone in deciding to phase out gas in new construction. Forty-three cities across California have already adopted a reach code to require electric heat pumps or solar thermal water heating for new construction. As we have witnessed with rooftop solar and zero-net energy policy, city and county leadership is key to raising the ambition of state policymakers. Change starts at the local level, and climate leadership is desperately needed if we are to reduce emissions to comply with climate science.

The ordinance will improve air quality and public health for Alameda residents. All-electric new construction will immediately improve indoor air quality for Alameda residents. On average,

Californians spend 68 percent of their time indoors and now with this pandemic, spend even more time indoors. This makes indoor air quality a key determinant of human health. The combustion of gas inside our homes produces harmful indoor air pollution, specifically nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and ultra-fine particles. These odorless and undetectable gas combustion pollutants can cause respiratory diseases, as well as more serious conditions, including death. Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory recently found that air pollution levels in the 55-70 percent of homes with gas stoves exceed EPA's definition of clean air, i.e. air pollution levels indoors in these homes would be illegal if found outdoors. A recent study found that gas stoves may be responsible for up to 12 percent of childhood asthma cases.

The ordinance will lower the cost of new construction and support affordable housing. All-electric homes can be cheaper to build than gas-heated buildings — and they can lower monthly utility bills for Alameda residents and businesses. Ensuring all new construction is built without gas hookups will help Alameda developers build more quickly and affordably as there will be no need for new costly gas infrastructure. A recent analysis by the Statewide Utility Codes and Standards Team found that building all-electric reduced construction costs on average \$5,000 for single-family homes and over \$2,000 per unit in a multi-family building.

Building all-electric will also save costs for Alameda residents and businesses in the long-term as we transition to a carbon-neutral economy. Gas distribution pipeline extensions to new homes are expected to become stranded assets well before the end of their useful life as more buildings electrify over the coming years. Stopping investments in new gas infrastructure is a fiscally prudent strategy to avoid saddling ratepayers and taxpayers with the costs of maintaining and ultimately decommissioning stranded gas infrastructure.

The ordinance will make Alameda's homes and businesses safer and more resilient in the face of climate change. California is experiencing an increasing occurrence of extreme heat waves, with practically each summer breaking previously held record temperatures. Most Alameda residents, particularly low-income families, do not have air conditioning and are not prepared to adapt to these heat waves, posing new health and safety risks. Air conditioning is an important bonus from replacing gas furnaces with electric heat pump space heaters, as the heat pumps can operate in reverse and provide high efficiency cooling when needed. Electrification offers greater comfort, safety, and climate resiliency when temperatures peak.

Lastly, gas pipelines are vulnerable to methane leakage, over-pressurization, and earthquakes. Aliso Canyon (2015/16), Bakersfield (2015), Carmel (2014), San Bruno (2010), and Rancho Cordova (2008), and the recent fires in North Carolina, Massachusetts, and San Francisco are but a few of the important and unfortunate reminders of the gas system's inherent risks. Given the earthquake faults in Alameda's proximity, fires exacerbated by gas pipelines after earthquakes are of significant concern. Communities with gas pipelines in earthquake-prone areas of Alameda face increased risks of fires since vibration and changes in pipeline tension during seismic events can result in leaking gas that fuels fires. Aging pipelines and associated equipment, and inflexible pipeline materials are vulnerable to shifts in the earth and buildings that put additional stress on pipelines, causing cracks and methane leaks.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor Tregub', written in a cursive style.

Igor Tregub, Chair

Sierra Club Northern Alameda Group



May 10, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Alameda City Council; Danielle Mieler, Sustainability and Reliance Manager; Lara Weisiger, City Clerk

Via: [mezzyashcraft@alamedaca.gov](mailto:mezzyashcraft@alamedaca.gov), [mvella@alamedaca.gov](mailto:mvella@alamedaca.gov), [tdaysog@alamedaca.gov](mailto:tdaysog@alamedaca.gov), [tspencer@alamedaca.gov](mailto:tspencer@alamedaca.gov), [jknoxwhite@alamedaca.gov](mailto:jknoxwhite@alamedaca.gov), [dmieler@alamedaca.gov](mailto:dmieler@alamedaca.gov), [clerk@alamedaca.gov](mailto:clerk@alamedaca.gov)

**RE: May 18 Meeting, Item 6B**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Golden Gate Audubon congratulates and thanks the City of Alameda for continuing to demonstrate its climate leadership in proposing this ordinance. We enthusiastically support the adoption of an ordinance to require new buildings in Alameda to be all-electric.

Golden Gate Audubon and its Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Reserve committee have worked with the City of Alameda on environmental and conservation issues over many years, most notably the creation and continued preservation of the Alameda Wildlife Reserve, the nature preserve on the former Naval Air Station where the endangered Least Tern nesting colony is located, and more recently on the adoption of the Bird-Safe Buildings and Dark Skies Ordinance.

New construction is an obvious place to start in reducing building emissions since it will be much more expensive and technically challenging to retrofit buildings later. With that consideration in mind, Golden Gate Audubon proposes that the exceptions in the ordinance be crafted as narrowly as possible, allowing exceptions only when electrification is technically and economically infeasible. It would also be ideal if exceptions could be "self-closing" without further council action as new high-performance electric technologies become commercially available. Exceptions 2, 4, and 5 appear to meet this test but exceptions 1 and 3 (commercial kitchens and ADUs) seem unnecessarily broad. On the cooking front, there are high-performance electric technologies available for most, if not all, cooking applications. Induction

cooking ranges are safer for employees and reduce kitchen cooling and ventilation burdens. Likewise, there's no technical reason to treat ADUs differently from other residential construction. One possible economic exception for ADUs is when there is pre-existing separately metered gas service, which would negate an important construction cost-savings opportunity.

We urge the City Council to adopt this resolution, but with the elimination of exception 1 and of exception 3, except when the ADU will use pre-existing separately metered gas service. Again, thank you for considering this ordinance, helping us move towards a future with fewer building emissions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Glenn Phillips". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glenn Phillips

Executive Director

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