

From: [Mike Swire](#)
To: [Al Royse](#); [Christine Krolik](#); [Marie Chuang](#); [Sophie Cole](#); [Larry May](#)
Cc: [Lisa Natusch](#)
Subject: Please implement All-Electric Reach Codes for new construction
Date: Sunday, March 13, 2022 1:54:06 PM

Dear Mayor Royse and Honorable Members of the Council,

I am writing to ask the City of Council to implement All-Electric Reach Codes for all new construction. Given environmental, safety, health, and geopolitical concerns, I don't understand how we can in good conscience continue to allow new construction that utilizes natural gas, one of the most destructive fuels in existence, for which good alternatives exist.

Environmental

As I hope you are aware, the need to tackle climate change is beyond urgent. We are currently spending billions of taxpayer dollars in this area to prevent sea level rise and wildfires from threatening our community. In Hillsborough, specifically, wildfire danger is extremely high given the hilly topography and thick flora growth. [Burning gas is now a bigger source of greenhouse gas emission than burning coal](#). We are fortunate to live in an area where the sun and solar installation is plentiful and required in much new construction. We are also fortunate to live in one of the most wealthy communities in America. There is no reason we can't join other Bay Area communities in implementing serious policies to slow climate change. We have no excuses. I disagree with the Staff Report that this is a "good first step". The time for first steps was 20 years ago. The time for real change is here. Let's not wait for the state to make us take action. Let's lead instead of following.

Safety

In 2010, a PG&E natural gas pipeline exploded in San Bruno, killing eight residents. Natural gas pipelines also go right through the length of Hillsborough, next to Black Mountain. They are less than 1,000 feet from West Hillsborough Elementary School, where my kids went to school. This is less than a mile from my home and maybe yours. How can we continue to promote demand for a fuel that has already killed several in a neighboring community and threatens a large number of Hillsborough residents?

Health

The dangers of natural gas use in the home, especially in the kitchen, has become increasingly apparent in recent years - New York Times ["Your Gas Stove is Bad for You and the Planet"](#). [75 percent of emissions occur when gas stoves are off](#). [This drives asthma](#), especially in children, similar to that caused by having a smoker in the house. Why would we facilitate this in residents' houses? Of course, natural gas production, often through fracking, drives air pollution and other health impacts for those living near plants, most of whom are largely low income. I encourage you to watch the documentary [Gasland to see the negative impacts of natural gas production](#), including tap water that catches on fire.

Geopolitical concerns

Sadly, there has never been a more important time to decrease our use of natural gas in the interest of saving lives. The people of Ukraine are dying at the hands of Putin's invaders. While the US and other nations are leveraging sanctions in response to this aggression, their impact has been mooted as Russia's power derives largely from its natural gas exports. Nations have been hesitant to impose sanctions on natural gas imports from Russia due to their dependence on this fuel. Natural gas is a global commodity, and its price and production are

driven by global demand, even if the West Coast of the US does not procure natural gas from Russia.

Induction stoves are very popular, especially on high end properties and among professional chefs - see NYTimes this week "[The Case for Induction Cooking](#)." Please make sure to include all appliances in the move to electric. Also, the lack of gas hookups will reduce costs for homeowners.

A "preferred" option would yield minimal change in a time of maximum danger. It is ripe for abuse by homeowners who will install gas equipment without necessary safety permits.

Also, in your discussion last month, there was discussion of retrofits. Isn't that out of scope here as we are focusing on new construction only? Those impacted here are largely people who have yet to move to Hillsborough.

Thank you for doing your part in preventing climate change, keeping residents safe, and fighting Putin,

Mike Swire

