

November 2, 2023

Item 2: LA MAESTRA HOUSING FOR HOPE PROJECT - PROJECT NO. 1064927

To Whom it may concern,

I think adding affordable housing to those in need is a good idea. However, 15,000 sq ft is a lot compared to what used to be 3,000. I think that if the new housing will not cause an immediate overcrowding of people and car traffic then I think this is a great idea. It is a great thing to be able to help those who are in need and by having this housing available to those who are below 60 percent of the area median income will be beneficial to many. I hope this works out for everyone. Thank you very much for your time.

Best regards,
Kobe Fowler

Good morning Mr. Del Valle,

I received the Notice of Public Hearing for La Maestra Housing for Hope (Project). On behalf of our client, Coastal Environmental Rights Foundation, please accept the following comments. The City adopted a new CAP in August/September of last year, superseding the previous CAP, replacing the CAP checklist with Consistency Regulations, amending the CEQA Thresholds of Significance, and setting more stringent greenhouse gas reduction goals. The City must ensure the Project's consistency with the updated 2022 CAP notwithstanding the narrow Consistency Regulations. *Mejia v. City of Los Angeles* (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 322, 342 ["A threshold of significance is not conclusive, however, and does not relieve a public agency of the duty to consider the evidence under the fair argument standard."]; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th 1099, 1109 ["Thus, in preparing an EIR, the agency must consider and resolve every fair argument that can be made about the possible significant environmental effects of a project, irrespective of whether an established threshold of significance has been met with respect to any given effect."]. In particular, the Project must decarbonize – continued reliance on natural gas infrastructure is at odds with the 2022 CAP. Though the City has not yet adopted the promised Reach Code, the CAP itself includes aggressive goals to decarbonize new and existing residential developments. Approval of new projects, such as La Maestra Housing for Hope, with gas infrastructure that has a lifetime of two to three decades will frustrate the City's ability to reach its climate goals – including its 2030 goal (just 7 years away).

The Project presents an opportunity to advance the City's climate goals and provide cleaner appliances and infrastructure to its residents – especially those in affordable units who may not have the ability to transition away from natural gas without government assistance. Natural gas appliances and HVAC systems are bad for the residents' health and the environment (as noted in the attached references).

CERF urges the City to find the Project will result in a significant impact unless the Project is consistent with the 2022 CAP and is conditioned to be developed without natural gas infrastructure.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our comments. Please send me a Notice of Decision and any environmental notices associated with the Project.

Kind regards,

Kristen



Kristen Northrop


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NEWS

Bay Area Regulators Approve Rules to Phase Out Gas Furnaces and Water Heaters

By Matthew Green  Mar 16

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Gas-powered water heaters are displayed at a Home Depot store on March 15, 2023, in San Rafael. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District voted today to ban sales of new natural gas water heaters and furnaces in the nine-county Bay Area by 2027 and 2029, respectively, to help lower pollution from smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

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county region as part of a concerted effort to reduce air pollution.

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Under [the ambitious timeline \(PDF\)](#) established by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, only zero-emission, electric water heaters can be sold or installed in Bay Area homes or businesses starting in 2027. The same goes for furnaces starting in 2029, and large commercial water heaters in 2031.

"The 1.8 million water heaters and furnaces in the Bay Area significantly impact our air quality, resulting in dozens of early deaths and a wide range of health impacts, particularly in communities of color," [Philip Fine, executive officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, said in a statement \(PDF\)](#).

Officials emphasized the rules only apply to new water heaters and furnace purchases, and won't require the immediate replacement of existing appliances. People can also still repair

their broken-down gas appliances, but won't be able to purchase new ones after the rules go into effect.

The rules also have no bearing on gas stoves, **an issue that has become a national political flashpoint.**

Still, the air board's move has sweeping implications for the roughly **two-thirds of households in the Bay Area that still rely on natural gas appliances (PDF).**

Gas appliances in residential and commercial buildings in the region account for a similar amount of harmful nitrogen oxide — or NOx — emissions as passenger vehicles, officials said.



NOx emissions contribute to the formation of ozone and smog, and exposure has been linked to asthma and other respiratory conditions, along with increased risk of heart attack, stroke, lung cancer and premature death, officials said.

'This groundbreaking regulation will phase out the most polluting appliances in homes and businesses to protect Bay Area residents from the harmful air pollution they cause.'


—Philip Fine, executive officer, Bay Area Air Quality Management District

"While we're talking about two basic appliances that many of us take for granted in our homes, they have tremendous implications not only from an emissions perspective, but also from a public health perspective," said Fernando Gaytan, attorney with environmental group Earthjustice, which advocated for the new rules.




The move comes less than a year after **California regulators voted to ban the sale of new gas furnaces and water heaters** beginning in 2030.

Bay Area Air Quality  
@AirDistrict · [Follow](#)

The Air District Board voted today to strengthen building appliance rules to reduce harmful NOx and PM2.5 emissions, protecting public health and air quality. New regulations will phase out NOx-emitting natural gas furnaces and water heaters. Learn more: baaqmd.gov/news-and-event...

3:19 PM · Mar 15, 2023 from Vine Hill, CA 

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The agency said the new rules will dramatically improve regional air quality, estimating it will avoid roughly \$890 million in health impacts per year, and about 85 premature deaths, from poor air pollution.

"This groundbreaking regulation will phase out the most polluting appliances in homes and businesses to protect Bay Area residents from the harmful air pollution they cause," Fine said in the statement.

More than 100 public commenters, many voicing support for the new rules, spoke in rapid succession at Wednesday's hearing, including public health experts, renters and a group of eighth-grade students.

"I'm here because I have an 18-month-old grandson who's already using an inhaler," East Bay resident Bill Olson told the air board. "These rules are future looking. ... I urge the board to help my grandson and all young people."

The agency said it hopes to implement the rules equitably and cost-efficiently, noting residents' concerns about the steep cost of buying and installing new electric appliances.

A new, zero-NOx electric heater will cost roughly \$8,030 (PDF), according to air district estimates released Wednesday. An electrical panel upgrade, if necessary, adds another \$2,630 to the total price tag.

Meanwhile, a zero-NOx electric water heater costs about \$2,820, plus roughly \$960 for any needed panel upgrade, the agency estimates.

But some **rebates for home energy-efficiency and electrification projects are currently available** through the Inflation Reduction Act passed by Congress last summer, and will increase significantly in 2024, according to the California Energy Commission. They include an **\$8,000 rebate for heat pumps that can warm and cool homes, \$1,750 for heat pump water heaters and \$4,000 for electrical system upgrades.**

KQED's Anna Marie Yanny and Laura Klivans contributed reporting to this story.

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BUSINESS

California moves to ban natural gas furnaces and heaters by 2030



California is moving to become the first U.S. state to phase out gas-fueled furnaces and water heaters in homes. Los Angeles and several other California cities have passed bans on a wider range of natural gas appliances in new construction, including stoves. (Joerg Sarbach / Associated Press)

BY ANGEL ADEGBESAN | BLOOMBERG

SEPT. 23, 2022 1:08 PM PT

California is [committing to a plan](#) that will make it the first U.S. state to phase out gas-fueled furnaces and water heaters in homes, a move environmentalists are betting will provide a template for other states.

The Golden State will ban the sale of all new natural gas-fired space heaters and water-heating appliances by 2030, under a proposal unanimously approved by the California Air Resources Board on Thursday.

“We need to take every action we can to deliver on our commitments to protect public health from the adverse impacts of air pollution, and this strategy identifies how we can do just that,” board Chair [Liane Randolph](#) said. “While this strategy will clean the air for all Californians, it will also lead to reduced emissions in the many low-income and disadvantaged communities that experience greater levels of persistent air pollution.

“But to truly meet the ozone standard, California needs more federal action to clean up harmful diesel pollution from primarily federally controlled sources, from locomotives and ocean-going vessels to aircraft, which are all concentrated in communities that continue to bear the brunt of poor air quality. We simply cannot provide clean air to Californians without the federal government doing its part,” Randolph said.

The vote Thursday wasn’t the final say on the matter. Rather, it directed state agencies to draft a rule for phasing out gas-fueled appliances that will be up for a final vote in 2025.

“We’re really hopeful that this is the beginning of a domino effect and other states will follow California’s lead,” said [Leah Louis-Prescott](#), a senior associate at RMI , a nonprofit focused on the transition to clean energy.

The proposal is part of a [road map of commitments](#) that the state is pursuing to shrink its carbon footprint and comply with federal air-quality standards. That far-reaching plan contains measures that would allow the state to transition away from burning gas and reduce emissions that cause air pollution and contribute to smog.



BUSINESS

L.A. is banning most gas appliances in new homes. Get ready for electric stoves

May 27, 2022

Because California still gets about 40% of its power from fossil fuels, the transition won't eliminate carbon emissions. The state is targeting a carbon-free grid by 2045.

The proposal does not include gas stoves, but about 50 cities and towns in California, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, have adopted regulations that ban or discourage the use of gas-fueled stoves in new buildings.

The [Los Angeles City Council voted in May](#) to ban most gas appliances in new construction, a policy that's expected to result in new homes and businesses coming equipped with electric stoves, clothes dryers, water heaters and furnaces. The motion left the details to city agencies, directing them to draft a regulation and bring it back to the council for approval by the end of 2022.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

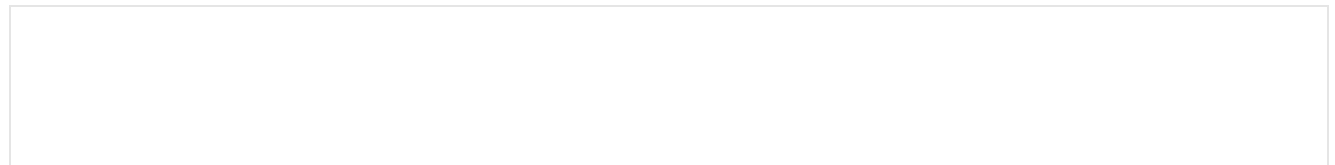
The Health Risks of Gas Stoves Explained

Gas stoves produce emissions that can harm human health and the environment. Experts answer questions about the dangers and how to limit them

By Tanya Lewis on January 19, 2023



Credit: Sean Gladwell/Getty Images



The Internet has been aflame in recent days over gas stoves—specifically, over whether they are harmful to human health and can or should be banned in the U.S. But this is not a new issue.

Scientists have long known that gas stoves emit pollutants that irritate human airways and can cause or exacerbate respiratory problems. The recent furor seems to have been set off by comments recently made by Richard Trumka, Jr., a commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), a government agency that addresses the risk of illness and injury from various products. Speaking about the commission's plans to potentially regulate gas stoves, Trumka told Bloomberg News that "any option is on the table. Products that can't be made safe can be banned."

In response, conservative politicians (and Democratic Senator Joe Manchin) pushed back strongly against what they perceived as an attempt to ban gas stoves. House Republicans even introduced legislation to prohibit the CPSC from outlawing the popular cooking appliances. The chair of the CPSC recently clarified that the commission is not planning any kind of ban but is seeking public comment to make gas stoves safer.

Scientific American spoke with several experts about the health and environmental risks posed by gas stoves. The answers below are based on their responses.

Do gas stoves produce emissions that are harmful to human health?

Gas stoves burn natural gas, which generates a number of invisible by-products. The biggest concern for human health is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). This gas is produced when natural gas is burned at high temperatures in the presence of nitrogen in the atmosphere, according to Josiah Kephart, an assistant professor in the department of environmental and occupational health at Drexel University. "We've known for a long time that [nitrogen dioxide] has many harmful effects on health," he says.

The Environmental Protection Agency regulates outdoor NO₂ emissions, setting standards for their safe exposure limit. But there are no similar standards for indoor exposure. Nevertheless, studies dating back decades have shown harmful effects from the NO₂ in gas cooking stoves.

"Our knowledge of the health impacts of outdoor NO₂ has grown dramatically in the last 10 years, and we have found that it is much more of a health risk than perhaps we previously thought," Kephart says. And the impacts of breathing NO₂ indoors are no different from those of doing so outdoors. "It has the same effect on your body," he says.

Studies have also found that unburned natural gas leaks from stoves—and this gas contains benzene, a known carcinogen. In addition, cooking in general creates fine particulates with a

diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM_{2.5}), a known irritant that can cause or exacerbate respiratory problems.

What are the known health effects from NO₂ exposure?

In a 1992 meta-analysis of studies on this topic, scientists at the EPA and Duke University found that nitrogen dioxide exposure that is comparable to that from a gas stove increases the odds of children developing a respiratory illness by about 20 percent. Since then, numerous other studies have documented the effects of gas stove exposure on respiratory health. A 2013 meta-analysis of 41 studies found that gas cooking increases the risk of asthma in children and that NO₂ exposure is linked with currently having a wheeze. Most recently, a study published last December found that 12.7 percent of childhood asthma cases in the U.S. can be attributed to gas stove use. (This result was found by essentially multiplying a measure of the previously reported risk of developing asthma from gas stove exposure by the proportion of children who live in housing with gas stoves.)

The American Gas Association (AGA), a natural gas industry group, issued a statement pushing back against the December 2022 study that linked gas cooking with asthma. The statement claimed the study authors did not conduct measurements of real-life appliance use and ignored some of the scientific literature on this topic. The AGA cited a separate study that found no evidence of a link between cooking with gas and asthma symptoms of diagnosis.

Scientific American also reached out to the American Public Gas Association, a nonprofit trade association, for comment but has not received a response to questions at press time.

Most of the studies on the health effects of cooking gas have been observational because it would obviously be unethical to intentionally expose children to environmental risks, says Ulrike Gehring, an associate professor at the Institute for Risk Assessment Sciences at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and a co-author of the 2013 meta-analysis. Still, some past studies have measured NO₂ concentrations in various indoor settings and have shown that people with asthma have more severe symptoms when they're exposed to higher levels of the gas. Although observational studies cannot prove that cooking with gas causes asthma, Gehring says, accounting for other risk factors such as parental asthma and secondhand tobacco smoke "increases our confidence" that it does.

In addition to acute effects such as asthma symptoms, long-term nitrogen dioxide exposure has also been linked to chronic lung disease and increased mortality in general.

Are the effects seen in both children and adults?

Though most of the relevant research has focused on children, there have been some studies on adults. Some of these investigations have found a stronger association between gas stove use and respiratory symptoms in women, suggesting that they may be exposed to more nitrogen dioxide—possibly during cooking—Gehring says.

If I already have a gas stove, what steps can I take to reduce the risks?

If you have the means, you can replace your gas stove with an electric one. The Inflation Reduction Act provides rebates of up to \$840 for purchasing new electric appliances, including stoves and cooktops. (Eligibility varies by state and income level.)

But if you can't afford to buy a new stove or if you rent an apartment and can't change the appliances, experts note that there are still things you can do to reduce your exposure risk.

If your stove has an overhead vent, you should use it every time you cook—and ideally it should vent to the outside. “You should always turn that exhaust fan on anytime that you're using your stove, no matter if you're just boiling water,” says Eric Lebel, a senior scientist at PSE Healthy Energy, a nonprofit research and policy institute in Oakland, Calif. “Even if what you're cooking doesn't smell, if that flame is on, you should have the exhaust on to help reduce the concentrations of the off-gassing, or those [nitrogen oxide] by-products, in the kitchen.”

Unfortunately, many people don't use their vents. They work best when they're running at full blast, which can be pretty loud, and the filter should be changed about every three months, Kephart says. And some overhead vents merely recirculate the air back into a room. If you don't have a “ducted hood” that vents to the outside, you can open a window and run a fan to increase ventilation, Lebel says. Portable air purifiers may also help, Kephart says, although they don't completely remove the NO₂.

You can reduce the amount of time you run your stove by using electric kettles and pressure cookers. You can also buy an electric cooktop; some are available for around \$100 or less.

Do gas stoves produce emissions that are bad for the climate?

Yes. Burning natural gas produces carbon dioxide, the most prevalent greenhouse gas. And unburned natural gas contains another potent culprit: methane. A 2022 study by Lebel and his colleagues found that gas stoves leak this unburned methane, which is not directly harmful to human health but accumulates in the atmosphere, where it traps heat and contributes to climate change. Lebel and his team found that methane emissions from gas stoves in U.S. homes could have as much impact on the climate as half a million cars.

And the problem isn't just our stoves themselves. "We've known for years that there's methane leaks in the [natural gas] distribution system, especially in cities on the East Coast, where the infrastructure is a lot older," Lebel says. "And then, even further upstream than that, there are leaks from transmission and from production." All of those leaks add up and contribute to the climate impact of the natural gas supply chain, he adds.

What about other gas appliances?

Gas water heaters, furnaces and driers also produce emissions and could leak methane as well, Lebel says. People may not be exposed to these emissions as directly as they are when cooking on a stove, but these appliances still produce pollution. The only way to completely prevent that is to use electric appliances, Lebel says.

Should gas stoves be regulated? And if so, how?

It's unlikely that existing gas stoves will be banned outright, so if you have a gas stove and want to keep it, you can. But regulatory bodies could, for example, try to set requirements that all gas stoves be sold with a fume hood that vents to the outside or that pipes be better fitted to prevent leaks. And some cities, including New York and several cities in California, have already passed legislation requiring that gas stoves and other gas appliances be phased out in certain types of new construction.

But I like my gas stove. Doesn't it cook better?

This is a common response among people who like cooking with gas. But in some cases, this view may be influenced by paid promotions from the gas industry. Gas stoves do get hot faster than conventional electric ones. But induction stoves—a type of electric appliance that heats food by inducing an electromagnetic field—are also very fast and more energy efficient.

If you love your gas stove, you don't necessarily have to get rid of the appliance. But it's a good idea to take some precautions to reduce the risks to yourself and your household.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)



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