

Why SLO Should Go Electric

Last year, when the City of SLO brought forward proposed Clean Energy Choice Program for New Buildings, promising “clean, efficient, and cost effective all-electric new buildings,” it encountered a predictable opponent: Gas utilities.

Such opposition had failed to prevent 24 other local governments in California from encouraging or requiring all-electric new buildings; as many more are likely to approve similar policies by the end of 2020.

The City Council approved the program at its Sept. 3, 2019, meeting; then the utilities stepped in to yank it back, claiming a potential conflict of interest involving one of the councilmembers who voted for the measure. The City is now waiting for the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) to complete its review of the complaint. The program, at one time said to be scheduled for second hearing at the April 7 City Council meeting, never made it to the agenda.

While we’re waiting, time has not been standing still. In addition to all the reasons why the program is a good idea, posted on the City’s website since 2019 -- [Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#), [Incentives](#), [Cost-effectiveness](#), etc. -- on April 28th, the UCLA School of Public Health released the report: *Effects of Residential Gas Appliances on Indoor and Outdoor Air Quality and Public Health in California*.

Key findings include:

- Phasing out gas appliances and using advanced electric appliances will reduce hazardous air pollution (CO, NO_x, NO₂, fine particulate matter and formaldehyde) and improve public health.
- Replacing gas with electric appliances in California's homes would result in at least 350 fewer premature deaths annually and over \$3.5 billion in annual health benefits.
- Children, the elderly, people of color, and low-income and environmental justice communities are especially vulnerable to air pollution from gas appliances and should be prioritized in future policies to curb emissions.

Another recent report, *Natural Gas: A Bridge to Climate Breakdown*, is also now available now available [HERE](#).

This report inform investors about the evolving risks associated with the use of natural gas in the power sector, to wit:

“At a time when investors are paying increasing attention to power utilities’ exposure and contribution to climate change impacts, natural gas infrastructure build-out is expanding rapidly in the United States. As coal’s inevitable decline within the energy system continues, natural gas, which is largely replacing it, is a growing source of climate concern. In isolation, risks to individual projects may seem minimal, but examination in aggregate reveals a different picture: Investment in new natural gas infrastructure is incompatible with a Paris-aligned, clean energy future.”