



CLEAN ENERGY ACTIVISTS PROTEST A GAS INDUSTRY PRESS CONFERENCE IN RIVERSIDE

Building Electrification

The Sierra Club's My Generation Campaign is fighting for an equitable transition to 100 percent clean energy and a fully electrified economy in California so that we can breathe clean air, create green jobs, and meet our climate goals. As the electricity sector transitions towards 100 percent clean energy, we must turn our attention to using this clean electricity to drive down fracked-gas use in our homes and buildings. By replacing polluting gas appliances with clean electric alternatives, we can improve air quality and safety in our communities, lower energy bills, use local clean energy resources, and help to stave off the worst impacts of climate change.

Background

Gas appliances like furnaces and water heaters in California's homes and buildings are responsible for over 50 million tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions annually. Burning gas in homes and buildings for heating and cooking produces toxic air pollution like nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxides, and formaldehydes that are hazardous to our health. Old, leaky gas infrastructure also increases the risk of fires, especially in earthquake and fire-prone regions spanning across the state. Gas rates are rising as the system ages and requires costly upgrades, making this an important moment to shift off gas to more affordable clean energy.

Policy leadership and action is needed to help all Californians fully power and heat their homes and businesses with clean electricity. There are no state goals or mandates specifically aimed at reducing emissions or the combustion of fossil fuels in buildings. High-performing and super-efficient electric appliances are available to replace all gas appliances. However, outdated policy hurdles that favor gas, powerful special interests, and a general lack of public awareness of the problem have kept Californians locked into the gas system for too long. For California to achieve our air quality and climate goals, we must shift off of gas and start electrifying homes, schools, and businesses today.



COUPLE ENJOYS TIME TOGETHER IN THE KITCHEN WHILE COOKING WITH AN INDUCTION STOVE

Benefits of Building Electrification

- Improved health and air quality
- Affordable local clean energy
- Building safety
- Comfort and climate resiliency

Our Campaign

The gas industry is our primary obstacle as it has a firm grip on our agencies and policy debate, and overwhelms communities with propaganda about the false benefits of fossil fuels while driving a wedge along lines of race and class. By using legal and policy expertise, grassroots and online organizing, and hard-hitting communications work, we can win the policy reforms, new buildings and appliance standards, and incentives needed to eliminate fossil fuel use in the buildings sector.

Our campaign seeks opportunities to:

1. Prioritize electrification programs including incentive and pilot programs that help low-income residents electrify their homes and lower energy bills.
2. Drive the development of new policies that support an equitable path to zero-emissions for all new construction and existing buildings.
3. Remove policy barriers to electrification at the state and regional level.
4. Raise awareness on the negative impacts of gas pollution from buildings and mobilize a broad base of community members and volunteer activists across the state.
5. Advocate for workforce development and training programs that support a just transition from fossil fuel jobs to positions in the clean energy sector.
6. Tighten state or regional air pollution standards for residential and commercial appliances.

Progress

Our building electrification work is gaining a ton of momentum across state regulatory agencies and cities and counties up and down the state. Here are some of our recent wins:

- The California Energy Commission approved new building efficiency standards that ends decades of favoring gas in new construction for low-rise residential buildings, effectively leveling the field for all-electric residential construction. The new building code goes into effect January 1, 2020.
- The California Public Utilities Commission voted to award \$50 million for clean energy all-electric home retrofits in low-income communities in the San Joaquin Valley.
- Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Monica joined fifteen large cities around the world in a commitment to clean energy buildings by 2050.
- Several cities including Carlsbad and Berkeley have passed local green building ordinances that support all-electric new construction, and dozens more cities and counties are on track to follow suit.



CONTRACTORS AND BUILDERS WORK ON A PLAN FOR ALL-ELECTRIC BUILDINGS IN CALIFORNIA

Get Involved

In order to build a stronger movement with robust grassroots support to layer onto our administrative lobbying and legal work, we need your help. To make a donation, get involved, or sign up for our monthly newsletter, please contact Senior Campaign Representative, Manager Rachel Golden (rachel.golden@sierraclub.org).

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