

Petition to the Chapel Hill Town Council on Increasing the Electrification of Chapel Hill
Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board
Offered by Tom Henkel
December 14, 2021

Whereas: The scientific consensus is that climate change is upon us caused primarily by the burning of fossil fuels; and

Whereas: The Town has a Climate Action and Response Plan to curb greenhouse gas emissions within Chapel Hill; and

Whereas: The carbon intensity of the electric grid has decreased to a point that the replacement of natural gas and other fossil fuel heating with various electric heating technologies will reduce GHG emissions; and

Whereas: Research into the association between residential gas stoves and childhood asthma found children in homes with gas stoves have a 42% increased risk of experiencing asthma symptoms (current asthma), a 24% increased risk of ever being diagnosed with asthma by a doctor (lifetime asthma) and an overall 32% increased risk of both current and lifetime asthma¹; and

Whereas: The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) found in an updated 2018 report comparing the cost of building an all-electric single-family home to a gas-fired home in seven cities around the US that all-electric homes saved money and reduced carbon pollution in every case, and the savings in running gas lines can be as much as \$24,000 per home²; and

Whereas: the California Energy Commission on August 11, 2021, adopted energy efficiency standards for new construction and renovations, the country's first statewide building code that incentivizes all-electric construction³; and

Whereas: Other states, notably Colorado, are embracing electrification, and many more are likely to take notice and pursue similar standards; and

Whereas: President Biden signed an executive order on August 5, 2021, that sets a target that half of all vehicles sold in the US be electric by 2030⁴; and

Whereas: 60 California cities including Berkeley, Ojai, San Francisco, and San Jose have, or are considering, banning natural gas in future buildings based on health and safety reasons⁵; and

Whereas: Chapel Hill currently requires that all new Town-owned construction and renovations shall meet the AIA-2030 energy performance standards and that all new private construction is incentivized to have energy performance 20% less than the current ASHRAE standard; and

Whereas: The use of energy for heating includes cooking, space heating, heating of water, and other process heating.

Therefore, the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board hereby petitions the Chapel Hill Town Council to adopt the following policies:

1. All Town-owned new construction and building renovations shall not use any natural gas nor other fossil fuels for heating purposes (as defined above) effective March 1, 2022.
2. All new private construction and building renovations which are regulated by the Town of Chapel Hill shall not use any natural gas nor other fossil fuels for heating purposes (as defined above) effective January 1, 2023.
3. The Town shall not rent buildings that use natural gas nor other fossil fuel for heating purposes

Notes

1. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyt150>
2. <https://bit.ly/37lWaKO>
3. <https://bit.ly/3fTj5Nt>
4. <https://nyti.ms/3ABXZ2E>
5. <https://localenergycodes.com>