

Archived: Friday, August 13, 2021 2:57:24 PM

From: [Alex Ramel](#)

Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2021 7:44:58 AM

To: [City Council](#)

Cc: [Clk](#)

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Building Electrification Policy

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:

[Stand.earth letter to Shoreline Mayor and Council 8-12-21.pdf](#) 

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Shoreline. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mayor Hall and City Council members,

Stand.earth (www.stand.earth) is an environmental advocacy nonprofit based in Bellingham. We envision a world where respect for people and the environment come first. In light of the significant impacts from gas use in buildings on public health and safety and our climate, we write to strongly support the Shoreline City Council in its exploration and eventual implementation of policies that support equitable building electrification in new construction and phase out the use of fossil fuels in the city, with an emphasis on providing a just transition for the most vulnerable communities and workers.

Our complete letter of support is attached. Thanks for your time and consideration of this important issue.

sincerely,

Alex Ramel | he/him
Climate Policy Advisor
C: +1 360 305 5079

STAND.earth



August 12, 2021

Dear Mayor Hall and City Council members,

Stand.earth is an environmental advocacy nonprofit based in Bellingham. We envision a world where respect for people and the environment come first. In light of the significant impacts from gas use in buildings on public health and safety and our climate, we write to strongly support the Shoreline City Council in its exploration and eventual implementation of policies that support equitable building electrification in new construction and phase out the use of fossil fuels in the city, with an emphasis on providing a just transition for the most vulnerable communities and workers.

Earlier this week, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its most dire report yet, which the [United Nations Secretary-General described as “code red for humanity.”](#) This report was released a month after the State of Washington experienced the [deadliest heatwave in its history](#), and during another summer filled with extensive wildfires and drought. As the IPCC report discusses, these events in Washington and the similar catastrophes unfolding across the globe are being driven by anthropogenic climate change caused by burning fossil fuels like methane gas.

In the face of this crisis, it is critical that elected officials at all levels of government take the bold action required to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in line with the best available science, in order to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. Increasingly, elected leaders are looking towards building electrification policy as one meaningful avenue for emission reductions. Not only do these policies protect communities from the worst impacts of the climate crisis, they also afford communities greater protections for health and safety by reducing indoor and outdoor air pollution.

Emissions from buildings are growing at a faster rate than any other source of carbon pollution in Washington, due to the direct combustion of fossil gas for heating and cooking in both residential and commercial buildings. Burning fossil fuels in the buildings sector in Washington produced [18 million metric tons \(MMT\) of carbon dioxide equivalent \(CO₂e\) in 2018](#), the equivalent to the annual emissions from 3,957,182 cars or 5 coal plants. This is 19% of the total emissions from fossil fuel combustion in the state. CO₂e emissions include emissions from burning the fuels at the end use and upstream emissions. Upstream emissions from buildings are mainly methane, a potent greenhouse gas and the main component of fracked gas, which leaks when extracted, processed, transported, and used in homes and other buildings.

Burning fossil gas in buildings both contributes to the climate crisis and greatly impacts air quality. It also poses significant health and safety risks across the state, disproportionately impacting children, communities of color, low-income communities, and other historically underserved demographics. Just one hour of cooking on a gas stove produces [nitrogen dioxide levels that would be illegal if found outdoors](#). [Recent studies](#) have shown that in Washington, burning fossil fuels in buildings was responsible for 52 premature deaths and \$577,650,107 in health impacts in 2017. 94% of those impacts



were from burning gas in buildings. This is a conservative estimate as these statistics only include health impacts from outdoor PM2.5 and precursor pollution; it also does not include pollution from upstream extraction.

Many cities and counties across the state and the country are already taking steps to ensure all new buildings are powered solely by electricity, including Seattle, Tacoma, Bellingham, and now 50 municipalities in California. Electrifying buildings is critical to addressing climate change; beginning with new construction is a common sense approach that is achievable, affordable, healthy, safe, and can create a more resilient and equitable energy system.

We look forward to supporting Shoreline's thoughtful leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Alex Ramel
Climate Policy Advisor
Stand.earth