

Resolution on transition to all electric appliances in the City of Bellingham

Whereas, the City of Bellingham is taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help our state achieve 100 percent clean energy. Priority recommendations from the Bellingham Climate Action Task Force guide the City's efforts; ¹

Whereas, Washington's electricity is already among the cleanest and most affordable in the nation, and it's getting cleaner every day as the state transitions steadily toward 100 percent emissions-free electricity by 2045;

Whereas, in Washington state, homes and buildings are the fastest-growing source of carbon pollution. This increase is attributed to the use of natural gas as one of the primary sources to power and heat our homes and buildings. Every time a gas appliance is used, it creates climate and air pollution. Discontinuing the use of fossil fuels and electrifying our city's homes and buildings is one of the most affordable and cost-effective pathways to help achieve Bellingham's climate goals;

Whereas, burning gas to cook, heat and power our homes releases carbon monoxide, particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, lead, and formaldehyde. These chemicals are harmful to our respiratory systems and our health, exacerbating existing respiratory illnesses, increasing blood pressure, causing decreased lung function, and even premature death;

Whereas, natural gas is methane, which is about 30 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, and methane leaks are widespread.

Whereas, as we transition away from air-polluting natural gas, we can stop breathing in the harmful emissions, meet our climate goals, and improve air quality; and

Whereas, the technology for high-efficiency heat pumps is already being used by construction companies to make new construction all-electric;

Therefore, the City of Bellingham should require that all new residential and commercial construction be 100 percent electric, and use heat pump or best available efficient technology where appropriate for space and water heating.

Therefore, the City of Bellingham should require that as gas appliances age and need replacement, any replacement appliances be 100% electric. The City should work with utilities and other partners to make sure low-income families have the help they need to ensure the change is just and equitable. And the City should work with local labor unions to ensure that energy retrofit and clean energy jobs created pay family wages and provide union benefits.

Adopted at the December 5, 2020 General Membership Meeting of Whatcom Democrats.

¹ <https://cob.org/wp-content/uploads/Climate-Protection-Action-Plan-2018-Update.pdf>