



# Active Bethel Community\*

(\*Formerly Active Bethel Citizens)

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We, the members of the Active Bethel Community (ABC), are calling on Mayor Vinis and the Eugene City Council to protect the health and safety of our constituents, and to ensure that the emission reduction goals of the city's Climate Recovery Ordinance are met. As such, we support Council to move forward with common sense climate policies to require that newly constructed residential and commercial buildings in our city be built all electric, and that the City set a formal goal to transition existing residential and, where feasible, commercial buildings to 100% electric, by 2035.

### Specifically, we urge the City Council to:

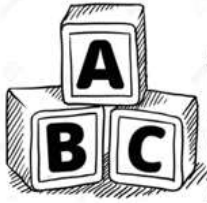
- Vote to pass [the Ordinance that is being considered at a public hearing on November 21, 2022](#), which would require single family and low rise residential be constructed 100% electric and
- Oppose any future proposals from NW Natural to site experimental hydrogen blending projects in our city.

### We also request that Council direct staff to:

- Draft ordinance language to require that new commercial and industrial buildings use all electric systems for space and water heating;
- Codify goals to electrify existing residential and commercial buildings by 2035 into the City's Climate Action Plan; and
- Create a plan for community engagement to develop policies for an equitable transition off of methane gas in homes and buildings, and centralize existing resources for households to purchase safe electric appliances.
- Designate brownfields and other impacted sites for community solar and storage projects, working with nonprofits and community groups to acquire funding through foundations and government programs such as the EJ Block Grants in the Inflation Reduction Act.

The use of methane gas in buildings is one of the fastest [growing sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the state](#). As such, it must be addressed if the City hopes to meet its ambitious climate goals. Studies have shown that pursuing electrification can greatly reduce emissions associated with homes and buildings, with an [RMI analysis on electrification in Eugene](#) showing that transitioning a home to all electric would, on average, reduce emissions by 70%.

These proposals would not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but would reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution and protect public health. This is especially important to the ABC. The Bethel neighborhood is a working class community, where over 66% of households are considered low-income, and with a higher percentage of communities of color compared to the rest of the city. Factories and industries in West Eugene are responsible for [96% of all toxic emissions](#) released in the city of Eugene, and asthma rates in the Bethel School District are [almost double](#) those of other neighborhoods in Eugene.



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*Page two:* A growing body of scientific literature has shown the deleterious impacts that gas appliances have on indoor and outdoor air quality, and associated health burdens that this exposure to pollution causes to communities. [A recent study](#) found that children that grow up in homes with gas stoves are 42% more likely to develop asthma symptoms due to associated indoor air pollution. Most recently, a peer-reviewed study in Boston – published by eminent researchers from Harvard University and other leading institutions – discovered that gas appliances have been [leaking methane in buildings](#) and surrounding areas at least six times the rate ever previously known or reported. Evidence is also mounting that mixing hydrogen with methane gas – which NW Natural proposed to do in our neighborhood – [creates more nitrogen oxide emissions when burned in the home than methane alone](#), further exacerbating air quality issues.

[Study after study](#) has shown that indoor and outdoor air pollution, such as that generated by the combustion of fossil fuels like methane in buildings, disproportionately impacts historically marginalized communities, including low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color households. Just in the last month, the New York Times [highlighted research](#) showing that gas appliances emit benzene, a colorless and odorless known-carcinogen, into homes.

Our community knows that we must transition our city off of polluting and dangerous methane gas, and to clean, renewable electricity if we are to meet our climate goals, and reduce harmful indoor and outdoor pollution. We see building electrification a crucial first step in building a more equitable and sustainable future for our neighborhood and Eugene as a whole, and strongly urge you to support these measures.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Active Bethel Community Executive Board