



Agenda Report

File #: 19-0700

AGENDA REPORT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 08/07/2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Management Services Department

SUBJECT:

City Council consideration of Resolution No. 2019-045 to support balanced energy solutions and the maintaining of local control of energy solutions.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2019-045 to support balanced energy solutions and the maintaining of local control of energy solutions.

ANALYSIS:

In an effort to reduce the State's carbon footprint, the state legislature and energy agencies have been pursuing ambitious goals for statewide carbon neutrality. Last year, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 100, which mandates relying entirely on zero-emission energy sources for its electricity by the year 2045. California has made great strides to combat climate change, but many policies occur at the State level without granting local governments the freedom and flexibility to achieve the State's goals while taking into account the needs of each community.

In consideration of the Corona's residents and businesses that would be affected by the bills enacted at the State legislature, staff is recommending that the City Council adopts this Resolution in support of balanced energy solutions, as well as maintaining local control of energy solutions. By diversifying the variety of energy sources, it creates a more resilient community and offers affordable and flexible options to our community.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to support balanced energy solutions and the maintaining of local control of energy solutions, and there is no possibility that approving the recommended action will have a significant effect on the environment.

PREPARED BY: NAOMI RAMIREZ, MANAGEMENT SERVICES ASSISTANT

REVIEWED BY: KERRY D. EDEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIRECTOR

REVIEWED BY: MICHELE NISSEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: MITCHELL LANSDELL, ACTING CITY MANAGER

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 2019-045
2. Exhibit A - News Mayors of Diamond Bar Rosemead West Covina Support Natural Gas 7.2019 - Article
3. Exhibit B - Letter of Opposition from Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice (CCA EJ)

RESOLUTION 2019-045

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORONA, CALIFORNIA, SUPPORTING BALANCED ENERGY SOLUTIONS AND MAINTAINING LOCAL CONTROL OF ENERGY SOLUTIONS

WHEREAS, California's energy policies are critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the impact of climate change on our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State legislature and State agencies are increasingly proposing new legislation and regulations eliminating choice of energy by mandating technologies to power buildings and public and private fleets, including transit and long-haul trucking, as a strategy to achieve the State's climate goals; and

WHEREAS, clean, affordable and reliable energy is crucial to the material health, safety and well-being of Corona residents, particularly the most vulnerable, who live on fixed incomes, including the elderly and working families who are struggling financially; and

WHEREAS, the need for clean, affordable and reliable energy to attract and retain local businesses, create jobs and spur economic development is vital to our city's success in a highly competitive and increasingly regional and global marketplace; and

WHEREAS, the City of Corona, its residents, and its businesses value local control and the right to choose the policies and investments that most affordably and efficiently enable them to comply with State requirements; and

WHEREAS, building and vehicle technology mandates eliminate local control and customer choice, suppress innovation, reduce reliability and unnecessarily increase costs for Corona residents and businesses; and

WHEREAS, the City of Corona understands that relying on a single energy delivery system unnecessarily increases vulnerabilities to natural and man-made disasters, and that a diversity of energy delivery systems and resources contribute to greater reliability and community resilience; and

WHEREAS, the City of Corona understands the need to mitigate the impacts of climate change and is committed to doing its part to help the state achieve its climate goals but requires the flexibility to do so in a manner that best serves the needs of its residents and businesses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Corona, California, as follows: That the City supports balanced energy solutions that provide it with the decision-making authority and resources needed to achieve the state's climate goals, and opposes proposed state legislation and policy that eliminate local control by mandating technologies that can be used to power buildings and fuel vehicles, and also meet or exceed emissions reductions regulations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 7th day of August 2019.

Mayor of the City of Corona, California

ATTEST:

City Clerk of the City of Corona, California

CERTIFICATION

I, Sylvia Edwards, City Clerk of the City of Corona, California, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Corona, California, at a regular meeting thereof held on the 7th day of August 2019, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAINED:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Corona, California, this 7th day of August 2019.

City Clerk of the City of Corona, California

[SEAL]



Don't let the CPUC stamp out a needed energy source

By Margaret Clark, Carol Herrera and Lloyd Johnson

As mayors of Diamond Bar, Rosemead and West Covina, we collectively represent more than 200,000 constituents in the San Gabriel Valley — constituents who work hard to provide for their families, and in some cases, their businesses.

Like most Californians, one of the top concerns of San Gabriel Valley residents is affordability. It's no secret that the California dream is getting more and more expensive, which is why it troubles us that the California Public Utilities Commission plans to force Californians to eliminate natural gas from their homes and go all-electric.

Many of our constituents have no idea the state fully intends to eliminate the use of natural gas in every California building, including homes. When we tell them what is happening they are incredulous and outraged because they love their natural gas stoves and appliances. How can it be that such an issue would not be debated in public?

We understand and support California's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ultimately reach carbon neutrality, but we cannot support an unnecessary added financial burden for our constituents. The vast majority of Southern Californians use natural gas in their homes for things like cooking, heating and laundry, and if the state mandates they replace those natural gas appliances with electric ones, they could be looking at an additional \$7,000 in equipment and utility costs. Having to spend thousands of dollars to comply with this potential statewide policy would decimate the budgets of many of our constituents.

But all-electric buildings aren't the only way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Studies have shown that using renewable natural gas (RNG) as a fuel source is 2-3 times more cost-effective than switching to all-electric buildings. RNG is made from food waste, wastewater, agricultural and forest waste that is currently emitting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. By capturing the methane emitted when this waste decomposes, we can keep traditional natural gas in the ground and address an emissions source. Some of us had the opportunity to visit a renewable natural gas facility recently and found the process to be amazing.

An RNG solution would allow California to reach its emissions-reduction goals sooner than requiring people to switch to using only electricity in their homes — because it may take decades for most people to replace their natural gas appliances.

Our constituents know that using one source of energy will make energy less reliable. They also know that renewable electricity costs more and that (already expensive) electric rates are predicted to increase — due to the need for more transmission lines, the cost of wildfires and wildfire prevention.

We urge all the CPUC commissioners to consider renewable natural gas to address carbon emissions from homes and businesses. Solar, wind and batteries are important clean energy solutions, but they can't meet California's energy needs alone. Solar and wind are intermittent sources and batteries can never store the amount of renewable electricity we need. Developing clean fuels including renewable natural gas will support renewable electricity to create a reliable energy system that truly reduces carbon emissions. Collectively, we have more than 50 years of experience, and one thing is clear to us: California's strategy of eliminating emissions from homes by taking out natural gas is not the solution. People don't want to go all-electric. Instead we should reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reach carbon- neutrality with a variety of options that includes renewable natural gas.

We encourage all Californians to send emails to the CPUC at public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov to express your desire to keep natural gas and renewable natural gas as energy options in California. *Margaret Clark is mayor of Rosemead and serves as first vice president of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG). Carol Herrera is the mayor of Diamond Bar. Lloyd Johnson is the mayor of West Covina.*

The California Public Utilities Commission during a meeting in San Francisco in January. The PUC plans to force Californians to eliminate natural gas from their homes and go all-electric.



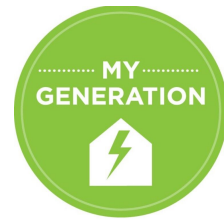
ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

<http://sgvtribune.ca.newsmemory.com/?publink=129e692ee#.XUBdSU7oB4M.twitter>

Exhibit B.

July 31, 2019

City of Corona
400 S. Vicentia Ave.
Corona, CA 92882



Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

It has come to our attention that a campaign of misinformation is running through cities and counties across the State of California. This campaign, led by a network of front groups, lobbyists and PR firms, are approaching jurisdictions to pass a resolution that is based on the false grounds that natural gas is safer and a more affordable opportunity for our communities. Their proposed resolution for a 'balanced energy solutions' attempts to keep our communities from a cleaner and safer future that the State of California is heading towards. It is clearly an attempt to protect private interests at the cost of our public health and climate progress. **This is why it is critical that your jurisdiction opposes this resolution and supports the clear road ahead towards decarbonization and electrification.**

Gas in our homes is a health and safety risk. 60 percent of homes in the state of California that cook at least once a week with a gas stove can reach pollutant levels that would be [illegal if found outdoors](#). On top of that, homes with gas stoves have [higher instances of childhood asthma](#). Given our region's unique geography tucked between the major freeway arteries of the goods movement, our communities already have a higher chance of contracting asthma and having asthma attacks triggered by the negative air quality.

Additionally, gas is becoming increasingly expensive. As our state electrifies our appliances and decarbonizes our grid, gas use will shrink and its costs will be spread over fewer communities who will end up paying more. A [recent study by E3](#) shows that low income communities will be hit the hardest by rising gas prices. SoCalGas and their front group, Californian's for Balanced Energy Solutions, are only concerned with preserving the gas status quo, despite the fact that their efforts will hit CA's most vulnerable communities the hardest. We should not tolerate any efforts that leave low income communities marginalized.

All-electric homes can be cheaper to build than gas-heated buildings — and they can [lower monthly utility bills for residents and businesses](#). Ensuring all new construction is built without gas hookups will help developers build more quickly and affordably as there will be no need for new costly gas infrastructure — an advantage in California's ongoing housing crisis. A recent analysis by the Statewide Utility Codes and Standards Team found that building all-electric reduced construction costs on average \$5,000 for single-family homes and over \$2,000 per unit in a multi-family building.

SoCalGas's attempt to slow walk the clean energy revolution through resolutions designed to hinder all electric design, construction, and retrofits is a dangerous and irresponsible reaction to the threats of climate change, housing affordability, and public health. These resolutions, introduced by [SoCalGas front group, Californian's for balanced energy solutions](#), have no place in local governance - it's up to us to educate communities, elected, and relevant stakeholders about the dangers of gas and the benefits of electrification for the sake of climate change, housing affordability, and public safety.

We would like to continue this conversation with you all and share what environmental justice communities are working on throughout the Inland Empire to improve our quality of life and our air quality. You can count on our complete opposition on attempts to take us backwards on our decarbonization efforts. Continuing to entertain false solutions will strap us into costly and expiring commitments that do not benefit your constituents in the short or long term. It is imperative that you oppose any resolutions that are vague and continue to keep our communities exposed to dangerous pollutants. Our battle to clean up our air quality crisis means taking every smart step forward. Please feel free to reach out to us at anytime for further questions and conversation.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vidaurre

Policy Analyst

Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice

Yassi Kavezade

Community Organizing Representative

My Generation Campaign, Sierra Club

Resources

1. <https://newscenter.lbl.gov/2013/07/23/kitchens-can-produce-hazardous-levels-of-indoor-pollutants/>
2. <https://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/national/queensland/cooking-with-gas-damp-housing-may-cause-childhood-asthma-study-20180415-p4z9pz.html>
3. <https://www.utilitydive.com/news/california-natural-gas-costs-could-spike-as-state-decarbonizes-e3-uc-irvi/556512/>
4. <https://rmi.org/insight/the-economics-of-electrifying-buildings/>
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/26/us-natural-gas-ban-socalgas-berkeley>
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/jul/26/us-natural-gas-ban-socalgas-berkeley>