From:	Doug Silverstein
To:	City Council (San Mateo)
Subject:	Community comment on Reach Codes – requesting additional considerations
Date:	Sunday, August 18, 2019 7:46:38 AM

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

I am writing today to thank you for your leadership in pursuing the County & PCE initiative to adopt building "Reach Codes" -- an inspiring and impactful climate action for the City of San Mateo. I truly appreciate this effort and your other admirable environment and sustainability initiatives.

With an ultimate goal of carbon free structures, Reach Codes make our buildings **safer, healthier, cheaper, & cleaner** (zero global warming impact). And they future proof against costly transitions from natural gas when it is eventually phased out.

However, as a resident of nearby Burlingame and environment & sustainability community leader, **I am concerned that the City of San Mateo's proposed Reach Codes:**

1. **Initially exclude multi-family residential**. This is disappointing given the upcoming high growth in this sector and its *global warming impact*. Furthermore, there are *negative equity implications* in that electricity bills will eventually be $500-1000 less expensive per year than gas. No other city it the County, to my knowledge, is taking this direction to initially exclude multi-family residential.
2. **Electrification is incentive based, not required**. This presents a risk in that *behavior in this geography is often driven by consumer preference, not cost*. If gas is used for cooking, there's a *risk that owners and builders will just pay higher construction cost* vs choosing electric heating. Menlo Park just officially introduced a Reach Code ordinance, for Aug 27 council meeting discussion, that requires all-electric commercial buildings and electric heat residential buildings.

As an active supporter in San Mateo County focused on the environment and equity, I know I'm not alone in this concern. You'll likely hear from other green and environmental justice community advocates in coming weeks that are passionately dedicated to long term happy, healthy and equitable living.

In summary, I request that your proposed Reach Codes: a) include the multi-family residential sector, and b) require, not incentivize, electric water and space heating.

Thank you,

Doug Silverstein, [redacted]

- Burlingame resident & community leader
- Fossil Free Buildings in Silicon Valley Campaign supporter
- Citizens Environmental Council of Burlingame board member & treasurer

- Green County San Mateo founder & leader
- Volunteer for Citizen's Climate Lobby, Sustainable San Mateo County, and Acterra

Also a C/CAG Resource Management & Climate Protection Committee member (nonprofit seat) but write today as a citizen, not Committee member.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HEALTH RISKS OF NATURAL GAS ENERGY USE IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Major gas leaks and explosions like those in San Bruno, Aliso Canyon, and in Western Massachusetts make the news, highlighting the precarious state of our natural gas infrastructure. However, natural gas pipeline explosions and incidents are quite common, causing 15 fatalities, 57 injuries, and over $300 million in property damage each year in the US. In fact, on 1 August, a gas pipeline in Kentucky exploded, killing 1, injuring 5, and destroying multiple homes, buildings and rail infrastructure. And the National Fire Protection Association found that natural gas use in homes is responsible for almost half of the residential house fires, causing 51 deaths and 194 injuries each year.

Further, natural gas leaks are a pervasive problem with gas infrastructure, and can be particularly hazardous for people living in earthquake and fire-prone areas like ours, since leaking gas leads to fires after earthquakes. The California Seismic Safety Commission estimates that 20 to 50 percent of total post-earthquake fires are caused by gas leaks.

Burning of gas in household appliances produces harmful indoor air pollution, including nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide, formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, and ultrafine particles. The carbon monoxide produced by burning gas indoors can be lethal without proper venting. Gas stoves produce so much nitrogen dioxide that the same appliance, if used outdoors, would be in violation of air pollution laws and not be allowed.

According to U.S. EPA, carbon monoxide poisoning results in roughly 15,000 emergency room visits and 500 deaths every year. The California Air Resources Board warns that cooking emissions from gas stoves, have been associated with increased respiratory disease. Young children and people with asthma are especially vulnerable to indoor air pollution caused by open flame appliances and other appliances that leak gas.)