

To: City Council

From: Climate and Environment Commission

Date: December 20, 2021

Subject: Commission request for Council Action regarding natural gas connections and heat pumps in future new municipal buildings

On October 26, 2021, the Climate and Environment Commission (CEC) approved a recommendation and a request for the City Council to take action to eliminate fossil fuel natural gas connections for water heating or cooking in new city owned buildings. Additionally the Council is encouraged to take action to ensure the switch to electric heat pumps for space heating in new construction.

Although city staff work is underway on municipal building energy use benchmarking and municipal building energy performance standards, the CEC believes it is important for the City of Columbia to stop investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure as soon as possible. Both the energy benchmarking work and the building performance standards work are expected to require another 12-24 months to complete. These projects are crucial to achieving the CAAP goals, however given the city has plans for new building construction in 2022 and beyond, the CEC feels it is important to take action now to establish a new direction for building energy infrastructure. The transition to electrification is a necessary part of the goal to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions in municipal operations by 2050. Ensuring new buildings are utilizing electric energy sources, saves tax dollars that might have been spent on natural gas connections and displays leadership in moving towards the goals of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan to reduce future greenhouse gas emissions.

Requested action:

All new buildings constructed on municipal property shall have electric heat pumps providing heating for the heated space. These buildings shall not have natural gas connections for cooking or water heating

Additional information and background on this request is attached.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Amparan

Chair

Climate and Environment Commission