



HEALTHY HOMES & CLEAN BUILDINGS

Washington State has some of the cleanest electricity generation in the country.

Now we can put it to work for even greater benefit for climate protection, air quality and health, job creation and affordability.

How? By using our clean electricity supply to power more and more of the space and water heating in our homes, businesses and schools.

THE POLICY SOLUTION

Healthy Homes & Clean Buildings includes many important elements to gradually phase out fossil fuels in buildings, including:

Authorizing local jurisdictions to voluntarily implement stronger building codes: requires the state building code council to create a stretch code option for local jurisdictions to adopt that would result in greater levels of energy efficiency and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Enabling public utility investments in building electrification: clarifies that public utilities have the authority to develop and implement electrification programs that will benefit their customers. Currently, a customer that relies on gas for heating is ineligible to receive incentives from their utility to upgrade to efficient electric appliances. Instead, they could receive generous incentives to acquire a new gas furnace, incentivizing a continued reliance on gas. This bill ensures that utilities can help customers switch to electricity, and utility research shows that this transition to electric homes and buildings can also put downward pressure on utility rates.

Removing historic gas preferences: updates statutes that currently create preferences for gas, rather than cleaner sources of energy. This provision would prioritize affordable energy, shifting the state's focus away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner, affordable sources of energy.

Gas utility transition plans: requires gas utilities to create comprehensive plans to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals by implementing a variety of strategies, including increased efficiency, conversion to electric appliances, and incorporating clean fuels. Utilities must ensure benefits to highly impacted communities, consider unique needs of tribal communities, and seek out opportunities for workforce development in the planning process.



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**HB 1084, SB 5093
2021 SESSION**

WHY CLEAN BUILDINGS?

CLIMATE PROTECTION

In Washington state, homes and buildings are [the fastest-growing source of carbon pollution](#), up 50 percent since 1990—and now cause 27% of Washington’s climate pollution, more than the industrial sector. This pollution comes primarily from gas burned in furnaces, water heaters, stoves and dryers. Just the methane pollution from gas operations impacts climate change in the U.S. as much as the annual tailpipe emissions from [about 70 million cars](#). With our state’s [low-cost electricity](#), studies like the Washington State Department of Commerce’s recently completed [State Energy Strategy](#) find that moving to electric space and water heating is our most cost-effective path to decarbonization.

BETTER AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

Gas burned in stoves, furnaces, water heaters and clothes dryers emits nitrogen oxides, ultrafine particles, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds—directly into the home from stoves and into the neighborhood air from furnaces and water heaters. [Nitrogen dioxide](#) decreases lung function and can exacerbate and lead to the development of asthma. [Fine particulates](#) can lead to heart attacks and strokes. People of color and communities living on lower incomes in Washington state [disproportionately shoulder](#) exposure to outdoor air pollution and the associated health risks, making it especially urgent to address gas pollution in the building sector that affects communities suffering the most pollution impacts.

JOB CREATION

Moving to clean-powered buildings will create jobs in HVAC work—both in electric appliance installs, service and maintenance—as well as construction jobs associated with building modifications. [A study by UCLA](#) found that updating to efficient electric appliances in California’s buildings over the next 25 years would create 100,000 full-time jobs in construction, manufacturing and the energy sector each year. Washington would expect to see jobs numbers for our state proportional to our population and housing stock.

AFFORDABILITY

All electric homes and buildings can save money. [Research](#) by the Rocky Mountain Institute shows that an average new all-electric home in Seattle will save \$4,500 in up-front costs compared to a new home with gas appliances for cooking and space and water heating. Over a 15-year period, there is a \$4,300 total savings with the all-electric new home. As Washington sees higher temperatures and increased wildfire smoke, air conditioning has become more prevalent to protect our health. Since electric heat pumps also provide cooling, they are especially cost-effective as a solution. Electric heat pumps and heat-pump water heaters are 200-400% more energy efficient than gas-fired equipment, dramatically cutting energy use.

For more information

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