

NYS Health Organizations and Health Professionals for the All-Electric Buildings Act (sign-on letter)

Burning Fossil Fuels in Buildings Endangers the Health and Well-Being of New Yorkers.

As health organizations and health professionals working in New York State, we write to alert the public and our state leaders that burning fossil fuels in buildings endangers the health and well-being of New Yorkers. We urgently call on the Governor and State Legislature to enact the All Electric Buildings Act (S562A/A920A) during this year's budget to end the use of gas (and other fossil fuels) in new construction, starting with new permits at the beginning of 2024.

Although policy makers and the public, influenced by fossil fuel industry misinformation, have long overlooked the serious public health problems associated with burning gas (and other fossil fuels) in the home, the facts are well-documented and the need for urgent action to protect the health of New Yorkers cannot be more clear:

- Health risks inside homes due to gas stove pollution are [well-documented](#) in numerous studies.
- Burning fossil fuels in the home produces toxic indoor pollutants including carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). Exposure to elevated pollution emissions from gas stoves can exacerbate respiratory conditions like asthma and is linked to other health risks like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and harmful reproductive impacts.
- New [peer-reviewed research](#) demonstrates that almost 19% of all cases of childhood asthma in New York State can be linked to air pollution from having a gas stove in the home.
- The American Medical Association (AMA), the nation's largest medical society, [recognizes](#) that cooking with a gas stove increases household air pollution and the risk of childhood asthma.
- Numerous studies over the past 40 years have shown that indoor air pollution from gas stoves can reach levels that would [exceed the standards for outdoor air](#) pollution, and indoor concentrations are often [much higher](#) than health-protective [guidelines](#) set by the World Health Organization.
- [Harvard research](#) shows that gas from stoves contains multiple potentially harmful chemical compounds, including benzene, a carcinogen for which there is no safe level of exposure.
- Electric induction stoves heat up food more efficiently than gas, creating less waste heat in the kitchen, especially important during periods of extreme heat and for residents of urban heat island neighborhoods, which tend to be disproportionately lower-income and communities of color. Extreme heat is the number one weather-related killer in America, responsible for over 130 deaths in New York City per year, a number that could increase to more than [3,300 deaths annually by 2080](#).



Fossil fuels burned in buildings for heating, hot water, and cooking also contribute dangerous pollution like NO₂ and PM_{2.5} particles to the air New Yorkers breathe outside. For example:

- New York's buildings currently emit [43,000](#) tons of NO_x pollution, more than buildings in any other state. Outdoors, NO_x leads to the formation of ozone "smog," and New York consistently [violates](#) health-protective [air quality standards](#) for smog set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Ozone smog exposure has been linked to increases in [respiratory conditions](#) and even premature mortality.
- Outdoor PM_{2.5} pollution from burning fuels in our buildings led to an estimated [1,300 early deaths](#) in New York in 2017, which translates to roughly \$14.4 billion in health impact costs in 2017.
- PM_{2.5} exposure is [associated with](#) dementia, decreased IQ in children, and poor pregnancy outcomes (stillbirth, preterm birth, and low-birth weight), with Black mothers especially at risk. Exposure to PM_{2.5} poses the [highest risk](#) to children, the elderly, and people who are pregnant and have other chronic conditions.
- People of color in New York are exposed to [2.6 times](#) as much outdoor PM_{2.5} pollution from residential gas appliances as whites.

Communities of color are disproportionately exposed to unhealthy air in general and are also more likely to be living with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease that make them more vulnerable to the negative health impacts of air pollution.

According to the American Lung Association's [2022 State of the Air Report](#), New York again ranked in the top 25 metropolitan areas in the country for days with unhealthy levels of air pollution.

Based on all we now know from the robust scientific evidence about the damaging impacts of indoor combustion of fossil fuels on New Yorkers' health, as health organizations and health professionals, we are united in urgently calling on the Governor and State Legislature to immediately enact the All Electric Buildings Act (S562A/A920A) during this year's budget to end the use of gas (and other fossil fuels) in new construction, starting with new permits at the beginning of 2024.

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