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Berkeley Support to Phase Out Fossil Fuels with Clean Electrification

Global warming causes more extreme and erratic weather, and recent extreme weather and fire seasons have highlighted the urgency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The City of Berkeley has committed to doing its share by reducing local emissions by 33% below 2000 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. State policies promoting renewable and /ow-emission electricity have been vital towards this effort. As of 2012, electricity only accounts for 15% of our emissions. While reducing emissions from electricity is helpful, we are increasingly turning our attention to the emissions from natural gas, which account for 30% of our greenhouse gas. The only way to reach our climate protection goals is to significantly reduce theÂ· consumption of fossil fuels in the form of natural gas and petroleum.

A growing consensus in climate mitigation research indicates a need to transition from natural gas appliances to high-efficiency all electric buildings powered by lowÂcarbon electricity. Electric heat pumps for space and water heating are up to 4 times as efficient as natural gas combustion technologies, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, heat pump water heaters can store energy as thermal heat, thereby helping harmonize the grid with intermittent renewable electricity. Despite the climate benefits of electrifying heating in residential and commercial buildings, the CPUC and CEC's energy policies impede electrification and lock the state into continued use of fossil fuels.

Berkeley is interested in considering a local building reach code ordinance to promote adoption of high-efficiency and /ow-greenhouse-gas technologies such as heat-pump water heaters or a/I-electric homes that enable the transition torenewable energy. Currently, policies as the state level are impeding our ability to encourage or require 'electric technology when natural gas is available. We respectfully request consideration of the following recommendations that would alleviate some of the barriers to building electrification:

1. Revise Title 24 Building Energy Efficiency Standards to include an all-electric reference design to streamline the transition to 100% renewable energy.
2. Provide rebates and other incentives under Energy Upgrade California to replace gas appliances with qualifying electric alternatives.
3. Support the creation of electricity rate structures for a new category of high-efficiency al/Â-electric buildings that allows residents to maintain low energy bills while transitioning away from fossil fuels.

We request that the state update these policies to enable us to phase out fossil fuel use and reach our global warming mitigation goals.