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## **Statewide Title 24 Building Code**

The California Energy Commission's latest proposal for building efficiency is disappointing. Construction is a major contributor to greenhouse gases, so at the very least, new construction should do something to offset this effect. To require new construction to include only one major electric appliance, and the least energy-dependent appliance at that, is inadequate. Fortunately, California is well-positioned to set an example for the world in the area of green construction.

First, why not require new construction to be all-electric? Such a standard would reduce climate emissions and air pollution and would benefit public health. As a lifelong resident of Los Angeles County, I remember the days when I was a kid when my mother told me to lie down instead of playing outside because the air was so bad. Although the air is better now than it was then, I know from my experience teaching in Bell that air pollution still affects many children, causing excessive numbers of asthma cases. Presumably eliminating the need for natural gas lines to every building would also reduce the cost to build and operate them.

Obviously constructing all-electric new buildings would increase electricity demand. Therein lies a second opportunity. Why not require all new buildings to have solar photovoltaic arrays? As the state hasn't built any nuclear power stations in years, and as we wean ourselves off fossil fuels, there will doubtless be increased demand for solar electricity. Rather than clearing vast tracts in the desert, putting solar panels on roofs just makes sense, and there is no better time to do so than during new construction.

There may even be parts of California which would be able to get by with very little electricity if they added solar space-heating and solar water heating. Obviously this would be less feasible than in a foggy place like San Francisco than it would be in Los Angeles, but it strikes me as ridiculous that my gym frequently lacked hot water because the boilers were down, all the while the sun was beating on the roof of the facility.

In short the current proposal asks too little of new construction. As Bill Gates pointed out in his recent 60 Minutes interview, we can solve the climate crisis, but only if we do as much as we can as quickly as we can.