

Electric-Ready Ordinance: financially prudent, public safety conscious climate action

Background: Electric-ready means that each new unit of construction has adequate electric service, breakers, wiring, and plugs to be easily converted to all-electric.¹ Electric-ready requirements drive developers towards all-electric buildings, enhance health and safety, and ease retrofit costs.

Current Situation: Electric-preferred Ordinance (File No. 190974) is intended to disincentivize new fossil fuel units through additional efficiency requirements for mixed-fuel buildings. It includes buildings currently in the construction pipeline (i.e. entitled but not yet permitted).

Why an Electric-Ready Requirement is Needed: Architects and engineers² consider electric-ready the ultimate all-electric incentive, with the current efficiency requirements doing little to affect the status-quo.

Electric-Ready is necessary to achieve San Francisco's Climate Goals

- As this graph from the Focus 2030 report shows³, we must act now to stop emissions from buildings:

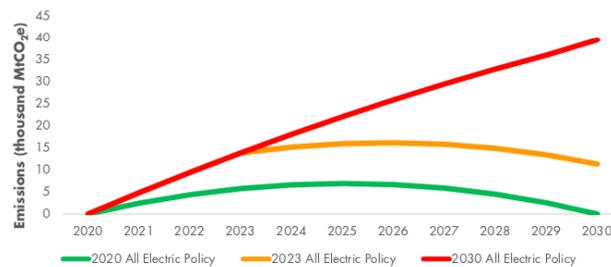


FIGURE 7 - IMPACT OF ACHIEVING ALL-ELECTRIC NEW CONSTRUCTION IN 2020 VERSUS 2023 AND 2030

- The Focus 2030 report also states “that starting today [July 2019], existing buildings must be retrofitted with efficient, all-electric systems at an average annual rate of 3% per year.” This goal moves further out of reach with every non-electric-ready new building constructed.

Electric-Ready enhances Public Health and Safety

- Natural gas is 94% methane, and leaks in pipelines are both explosive and cardio-vascularly harmful.⁴
- 75%⁵ of San Francisco's 72,000 units of construction⁶ (plus numerous commercial units) currently “in the pipeline” are slated to be built in the already disproportionately polluted Southeast Corridor.
- Mandating electric readiness will reduce health disparities and inequity in our City, improving outdoor and indoor air quality in historically disadvantaged communities and reducing the likelihood people will be stranded with rising gas costs and polluting infrastructure.
- After a 7.9 earthquake, in addition to the immediate risk of explosions and resulting fires, gas service would likely be cut for a minimum of six months.⁷

Electric-Ready makes Economic and Legal Sense

- All-electric new buildings are already cheaper than mixed-fuel (even excluding the cost of multi-thousand dollar gas lines)⁸
- Electric-readiness can avert thousands of dollars of retrofit costs per unit.⁹
- Gas bans are legally uncharted territory, whereas electric-readiness requirements have already been approved by the California Energy Commission¹⁰. Doing both is legally prudent.

¹ From <https://aceee.org/blog/2018/08/new-programs-nudge-homeowners-switch>

² Scott Shell (EHDD) and Ted Tiffany (Guttman & Blaevoet)

³ http://sfenvironment.org/sites/default/files/fliers/files/sfe_focus_2030_report_july2019.pdf, p. 12

⁴ <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp1913663>

⁵ <https://sfplanning.org/southeast-framework>

⁶ <https://sfplanning.org/project/pipeline-report#housing-development-snapshot>

⁷ Panelists at the Zero Emissions Building Task Force's “Building the All Electric City” workshop, 1/8/20

⁸ <https://rmi.org/report-release-electrifying-buildings-for-decarbonization/>

⁹ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vjpCuwgToUFQytEApe3_X94CdLkF3RSeoaPsgmOnh2k/edit?usp=sharing

¹⁰ <https://www.energy.ca.gov/news/2019-12/cec-approves-first-local-energy-efficiency-standards-go-beyond-2019-statewide>