



Testimony highlights and excerpts

October 20, 2022

Check out quotes from some of the more than 100 people who testified in support of the new residential building codes before the WA State Building Code Council during public hearings in Yakima and Olympia. These stronger codes are imperative for health, equity, and the climate.

“In the past year alone, we have witnessed unprecedented floods, wildfires, droughts, and heat waves that have cost hundreds of lives and caused significant economic disruption across the nation ... Our State Energy Strategy has pledged to address these disparities while also ensuring the ‘equitable distribution of clean energy benefits and reduction of burdens to communities highly impacted by climate change.’ The SBCC adoption of an energy code that reduces indoor and outdoor air pollution will create a tangible pathway toward achieving these promises while repairing historical inequities that are further aggravated by climate change.” **Senator Liz Lovelett**, Representing WA’s 40th District

“Here in Eastern Washington, we are dealing with extreme environmental issues: wildfires, air quality ... Our tribal communities get hit first, they get hit the worst ... These energy codes can go a long way into helping our emissions and protecting against climate change.” **Dr. Margo Hill**, Member of the Spokane Tribe

“We know the impacts of Environmental Racism are not borne equally. Marginalized communities have lived experience and documented inequalities because of a system that was constructed with intention to oppress and cause harm. Every three years this body has an opportunity to look at these policies, and to pass ordinances that align with WA’s values. We have an opportunity to say, ‘our BIPOC neighbors, friends, and family member’s matter.’ We can send a strong message, we don’t expect Washingtonians to choose between bare necessities and their basic human health. We want to offer a better choice.” **Paula Sardinias**, President & CEO, FMS Global Strategies, LLC

“When the air outside is polluted to the point of hurting human health, we’re told to stay inside. But the sad reality, and what many don’t realize, is that indoor air is estimated by the EPA to be two to five times more polluted than outdoor air. This fact is unacceptable. Homes should be a place where children, elders, those most vulnerable, and all of us can feel safe and breathe easily. The prevalence of toxic fracked gas in homes is a moral issue, just as the climate crisis is a moral crisis. To help us better live into our values of stewardship, justice, and health, we ask the Building Code Council to please vote in support of the full package of residential energy code proposals.” **Sister Jessica Zimmerle**, Advocacy Director for Earth Ministry/Washington Interfaith Power & Light

“For our climate, our health, and our safety, it’s imperative that we end the use of gas in our buildings, beginning by not connecting any more new buildings to the gas network.” **Brian Emanuels**, Mercer Island resident

“High emissions causing climate change have contributed to the population influx to our region as temperatures and water access elsewhere become untenable. The housing affordability crisis is already here. Building with fossil-fuel furnaces all these years has not prevented it. If anything, it’s contributed to it.” **Rachael Weasley**, Bellingham renter, mother and local pastor

“We know that low-income communities have higher rates of adverse health conditions, are more exposed to environmental hazards, and take longer to overcome natural disasters - climate change will exacerbate these inequities ... If we don’t help create opportunities for low-income households to move off fossil fuels now, they will be left holding the bill for any stranded infrastructure down the line after wealthier residents have chosen to move off the gas system.” **Carly Colgan**, Chief Executive Officer, South Puget Sound Habitat for Humanity

“It is absolutely essential that we remove gas from our homes. The climate crisis is already wreaking havoc on our communities, and the health consequences of climate change related events are overloading our hospitals, overworking our doctors and nurses, and most importantly, they’re reducing the quality of life of so many families across the state. Not only will denying these proposals allow more climate warming greenhouse gasses to enter our atmosphere, it will also continue to make our communities sick.” **Keith Sanderson**, Medical Student, University of Washington

“We’ve been building all electric for over 30 years... The need for cooling has been a big change, everything we build or remodel now gets AC... It’s not just the warmer summers, it’s also air quality issues like smoke, wildfire, and smog that don’t allow folks to open up homes and air out at night like we did in the past. The other thing we’ve noticed with our rentals is that more and more people are working from home, and to do that productively you need a conditioned space. If you’re going to put in AC it just makes sense to go with a heat pump.” **Rick Marshall**, builder and developer in southwest WA

“I urge you to see through the intentionally misleading claims of the gas utilities that ignore the growing body of evidence about the harms of continuing to burn gas fuel in our homes. I urge you to adopt the proposed energy code updates, because moving away from methane gas to using clean and efficient electricity in our homes is a necessary step to address our climate crises while at the same time to protect our community public health.” **Cathryn Chudy**, longtime resident and retired health care worker in Vancouver, WA

"Most importantly, [from past projects] we have learned the proposed changes to the residential energy code provide cost effective solutions to meet state climate action targets with materials and technologies that are available right now. And in return occupants have a building that is healthier, more comfortable, durable and costs significantly less to operate." **Dan Welch, Architect and resident in Bellingham**

“Long term exposure to nitrogen dioxide can has been linked with heart failure, asthma, and other morbidities. Furthermore, the impacts of gas disproportionately affect low income communities of color and fracking practices often directly impact indigenous communities. As a future Washington-state physician, I want to see all of our communities living with good air quality.” **Leslie Kenefick**, Class of 2025, Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine

“As a state legislator, I am committed to help solve climate change by lowering Washington’s greenhouse gas emissions, helping my constituents and our state be healthier and more resilient. The

legislative directive is clear and the SBCC can assist in meeting our clear legislative intent by establishing a pathway toward clean electrification for our homes.” **Representative Davina Duerr**, Representing WA’s 1st District