



## Written Comments to the Multnomah County Commission: Action to Regulate Polluting Gas Appliances & Set a Clean Air Standard

Chair Vega Pederson, and Multnomah County Commissioners,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am an energy systems modeler and climate policy analyst, and I have analyzed and developed deep decarbonization pathways in over a dozen countries. Today I represent the MCAT, Mobilizing Climate Action Together, which is a community of volunteers working to ensure that Oregon builds a healthy climate and a green-energy economy for future generations.

It has been over a year since the Multnomah County Health Department released its report on the health impacts of burning methane, so-called “natural” gas, in homes and buildings. As stated in the report, gas appliances are one of the largest sources of climate pollution in the county and generate significant amounts of both indoor and outdoor NOx pollution, producing negative effects on public health, which can lead to asthma and other respiratory issues.

Given the climate impacts that have already claimed the lives of too many Multnomah County residents, this action is consistent with the core strategies for transitioning to a clean energy economy, which have been identified in multiple reports from multiple groups studying potential decarbonization pathways:

1. Achieving 100% clean electricity generation
2. Converting our transportation fleets to electric vehicles
3. Converting our buildings and industry (where feasible) to electricity, and
4. Developing carbon-free fuels for long-term storage, reliability and hard to electrify applications.

These reports, which are referenced in my written comments, cover studies at the global, regional and national levels, and were developed by organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change<sup>1</sup>, the International Energy Agency<sup>2</sup>, the Center for Strategic and International Studies<sup>3</sup>, and even people like Bill Gates<sup>4</sup>

The gas utilities are spreading disinformation and promoting the false promise of decarbonizing the gas system. Please don't believe these false promises. Methane cannot be decarbonized and is not a long-term solution. **Strong action to reduce fossil fuel pollution is required this decade** if we are to avoid potentially catastrophic climate consequences that could be triggered by various possible tipping points.

Specifically, we urge the Commission to direct staff to develop concrete policies to regulate the use of polluting gas appliances such as developing clean air standards for appliances like those adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Thank you for your attention.

### MCAT Steering Committee

Brett Baylor, Rick Brown, Linda Craig, Pat DeLaquil, Dan Frye, Debby Garman, KB Mercer, Michael Mitton, Rich Peppers, Rand Schenck, Jane Stackhouse, Joe Stenger and Catherine Thomasson

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<sup>1</sup> Sixth Assessment Report: Working Group III: Mitigation of Climate Change - Summary for Policymakers, 2022

<sup>2</sup> [Net Zero by 2050 – Analysis - IEA](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.csis.org/analysis/climate-solutions-series-deep-decarbonization-pathways>

<sup>4</sup> How to Avoid a Climate Disaster, Bill Gates, Knopf, 2021, p154.