



To: Duane Jonlin, Seattle Department of Construction & Inspections  
Email: [duane.jonlin@seattle.gov](mailto:duane.jonlin@seattle.gov)  
From: Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Re: Proposed 2018 Seattle Commercial Energy Code  
Date: October 1, 2020

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility would like to offer our support for the proposed changes to the Seattle Commercial Energy Code.

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (WPSR) is a 40-year-old, physician-led advocacy organization working to create a healthy, just, peaceful and sustainable world. Representing hundreds of health professionals in Washington working to preserve the wellbeing of our communities and climate, we have a unique understanding of the present and potential negative implications that fracked gas poses to our health. The combustion of gas indoors has been linked to a number of adverse health outcomes, especially in underprivileged communities, including asthma, pulmonary infarction, and death resulting from exposure to toxic pollutants released during combustion. Additionally, the continued use of fracked gas poses an ongoing threat to community health as it exacerbates climate change, locks us into a high carbon future, and continues to manifest in severe and negative health outcomes especially among those most vulnerable. It is imperative that we take a stand to protect community health by eliminating the use of fracked gas indoors.

**We support the proposed revisions to the Seattle Commercial Energy Code, and we urge the City to continue moving these changes forward to City Council:**

- Eliminate most uses of inefficient electric and fossil fuel-fired water and space heating equipment in favor of efficient electric heat pumps and heat pump hot water heaters. For the health of our city and our climate, it is important that we move away from using fossil fuel in buildings.
- Improve building envelopes to make more energy-efficient and comfortable buildings – and ensure new buildings will function at Seattle’s carbon-neutral standard. Buildings constructed under this code will be around for decades, and it is important that we build them right from the start and avoid costly future upgrades.
- Create more opportunities for on-site solar. More distributed solar around the city will allow the city’s access to clean electricity to be freed up for other uses.

In particular, we would like to highlight support for the following code changes:

- **C403.1.4.** formalizes existing code restrictions in commercial buildings on electric resistance and fossil fuel space heating and extends the changes to multifamily buildings.
- **C404.2.3.** transitions heat pump water heaters into multifamily buildings with central hot water over the code cycle.



- **C407.3.1.** disallows buildings to use energy modeling to make a building envelope any worse than the prescriptive code.
- **C406.1.** have buildings be even more efficient in their energy use.

We look forward to this package of changes moving forward.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mark Vossler, President of the Board  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Dr. Max Savishinsky, Executive Director  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Dr. Ken Lans, Climate and Health Co-Chair  
Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Nick Manning, MPA, Climate and Health Co-Chair  
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