

To: council@seattle.gov
Subject: Seattle Energy Code

I am writing on behalf of People for Climate Action – Seattle, to **urge you to support the new Energy Codes**. Buildings represent over one-third of Seattle’s emissions, and their emissions are *increasing*. As reported by OSE: “GHG emissions from the building sector increased 8.3% since our last report, largely as a result of growing fossil gas use.” One of the reasons for the increase in emissions is an increase in the number of buildings. Seattle must be able to offer people new homes and buildings without making our climate problems worse. This is exactly what the new code will do by making our new buildings more efficient and making the energy they use cleaner. These buildings will be standing longer than any of us and should reflect standards that will still be reasonable many years from now. Seattle needs to cut emissions 7% per year. These new energy codes are a necessary step in that direction.

There are two amendments we would like you to make before passing the Energy Code. First, the **requirement for efficient electricity to be used for space heating in place of fossil fuel should go into effect immediately**. Furnaces last a long time, and they produce a lot of pollution. Do we want the emissions increases that would result from exempting them? Do we want to have to pay the owners of these buildings to switch to clean energy before their furnaces have reached the end of their lifespan? Second, the requirements for **efficient electricity for water heating should apply to all new commercial buildings, not just hotels and large multi-family buildings**. All buildings use hot water, and there is no reason the same rule cannot apply to all buildings.

The City Council did a lot to support climate in 2020, even in the face of the pandemic. There are many more changes that we would like to see, that the city and its people don’t have the funds to do right now because of the pandemic. But these energy code revisions don’t cost the city anything, and they will reduce the utility bills our residents face in future years. We urge you to pass the Energy Code *with* the amendments and let Seattleites know that we are beginning to take meaningful action against climate change.

Thank you,

Robin Briggs for People for Climate Action – Seattle