Getting the Gas Out of Xcel’s Clean Heat Plan

Empower Hour
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Lauren Swain, Coordinator
PSR Colorado
(Physicians for Social Responsibility)
Compendium on the Risks & Harms of Fracking

Health Effects from Gas Stove Pollution

Why Burning Hydrogen in Buildings is Bad for Climate & Health

Mobilizing Health Professionals and Allies to Address the Gravest Environmental Threats To Human Health & Survival
The Climate Crisis is a Health Crisis
Aggravated by Burning Gas in Homes

Burning fossils fuels (gas, heating oil, etc.) in buildings is responsible for about 29% of US greenhouse gas emissions fueling the climate crisis.

Fires, Smoke, Extreme Heat, Drought, & Floods Harm Coloradans’ Health & Safety.
The Climate Crisis is a Health Crisis Aggravated by Burning Gas in Homes

The "natural" gas that Xcel pipes into homes is methane gas - a fossil fuel. Methane leaks into the atmosphere during production, transport, and end use. Methane gas is 86 times more damaging to the climate than CO2 over a 20-year period.
The Climate Crisis is a Health Crisis Aggravated by Burning Gas in Homes

Methane gas is produced by drilling and fracking. These operations emit hazardous air and water pollutants and are subject to chemical spills, fires, and explosions. Oil and gas production is responsible for about 40% of Front Range ozone precursor emissions leading to asthma attacks and other serious health conditions.
Colorado’s Clean Heat Statute: SB21-264

A Balancing Act

• Requires large gas utilities to submit plans to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from their gas distribution system by 4% by 2025 and 22% by 2030, compared to 2015 levels.

• Allows utilities to raise rates by up to 2.5% to recover their costs.
Xcel, Colorado’s largest gas utility, submitted its plan to the PUC on August 1, 2023, the PUC ruling is due on May 28, 2024.

This PUC ruling will affect Xcel customers for years to come and influence standards for other Colorado utilities with impacts on:

- Health
- Safety
- Energy Costs
- Comfort
- Justice
- Climate Future
What Opportunities does Xcel's Clean Heat Plan present?

Solutions benefiting ratepayers:

● Demand Side Management/Efficiency
● Beneficial Electrification: Heat Pumps for Heating AND Cooling
What Pitfalls does Xcel's Clean Heat Plan present?

Costly, ineffective, risky strategies that do not benefit ratepayers raise the price of Xcel's plan:

- "Recovered Natural Gas"
- "Certified Natural Gas"
- Hydrogen-Methane Blends

Xcel's Clean Heat Plan must put health & climate first, not bill $$$ for false solutions.
Health and Safety Problems from using Hydrogen-Methane Blends in Homes

- Burning hydrogen blends increases NOx emissions that cause asthma and other serious health conditions.
- Hydrogen gas leaks, ignites, and explodes even more easily than the current methane gas supply.
- Hydrogen is expensive and is largely sourced from methane gas itself.
- Investing in hydrogen blending takes funding away from real solutions the benefit ratepayers.

EXPENSIVE
EXPLOSIVE
POLLUTING

STOP XCEL’S DANGEROUS HYDROGEN AGENDA

Do you want hydrogen piped into your home?

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Q: Why are Xcel's proposed Recovered and Certified Gas programs bad for Health and Safety?

A: Because burning ANY FORM of methane gas in homes is bad for health and safety.

- Burning gas releases nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter (PM2.5) and other hazardous air pollutants
- These pollutants increase asthma attacks, aggravate COPD, and cause and aggravate other health conditions that shorten and degrade the quality of human life
- Heating with gas risks monoxide poisoning.
- Gas appliance malfunctions cause fires and explosions.
Air Pollution from Methane Production and Use Triggers Asthma - an Environmental Injustice

• Asthma attacks cause missed days of school and work, leading to greater hardship for low income communities.

• Low income communities are least able to afford the cost of medication, treatment and hospital bills due to asthma attacks.

• Environmental racism causes Black and Latino communities to be disproportionately exposed to additional air pollution sources such as highways, factories, and refineries.
Equitable Public Policy Advances Environmental Justice & Benefits ALL Coloradans

Electric heat pumps improve indoor and outdoor air quality and provide efficient heating AND COOLING to mitigate the effects of climate change on children, the elderly, and all vulnerable populations, while protecting the health of everyone in the dwelling.
Your Voice Makes a Difference

Faced with opposition, Xcel took Certified Natural Gas and Carbon Offsets out of its emission reduction portfolio and delayed its residential hydrogen blending demonstration project—twice.

However, Xcel is still asking the PUC for approval to make ratepayers subsidize these ineffective strategies.
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PUBLIC COMMENT: Please submit your comments to the PUC by April 9th, following instructions provided by our host.

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