

Finlayson, Ian (ENE)

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Subject: Building Code Comments

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My comments presented today at the DOER Public Hearing:

I'm Joseph McCabe from Needham. I'm a physician and a member of Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, a physician-led organization working to address two existential threats to human health: climate change and the risk of nuclear war.

The revised DOER building codes allow the use of natural gas and other harmful combustible fuels in buildings for which it is technologically feasible and would be cost-effective to build all-electric. In Massachusetts, air pollution generated from use in buildings is essentially on a par with vehicle pollution. Allowing new construction that uses harmful combustible fuels perpetuates the climate crisis, putting future generations, including my granddaughter's, at risk. We need to respond NOW to the crisis by doing all that we can to lessen the generation of greenhouse gasses. DOER must lead by requiring, when at all possible, that all new building be all-electric.

In the Fall of 2021, the New England Journal of Medicine and over 200 other medical journals published an editorial which warned of the catastrophic harm to health globally that will be impossible to reverse unless emergency measures are taken to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Higher temperatures have already brought increases in dehydration and kidney failure, skin cancers, tropical infections, pregnancy complications, allergies, psychiatric illnesses, cardiovascular and pulmonary illnesses and death. The most vulnerable, including children, older populations, ethnic minorities, poorer communities, and those with underlying health problems are disproportionately harmed.

Gas burning appliances release toxic fumes. Cooking with gas is associated with a 42% increased rate of asthma in children; this problem cuts close to home; my granddaughter has asthma. Also,

recent studies have shown that gas appliances emit significant amounts of carcinogens, even when not in use.

Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility is requesting a **stronger specialized opt-in net zero stretch** code. We recommend that DOER prohibit gas in all building types for which it is technologically feasible to build all-electric.