

Hello, my name is Mary Gard, and I've been an active member of Sustainable Wellesley for about 14 years.

I live in a house that was built in 1854. It was originally heated with wood and coal burning stoves. It has an unused original fireplace in nearly every room.

Surrounded by this history, I sometimes think about the crazy and courageous decision that public officials (just like you) made so many years ago, to allow the piping of highly flammable, explosive gas under all our streets and into our homes. Clearly these public officials thought that, despite the costs and the risks, there was a benefit to making this monumental transformation in home heating. Certainly homeowners must've been delighted not to breathe the soot and smoke that came from burning wood, coal and oil.

Now we realize that the so-called "natural" gas is very unhealthy too. Burning Methane produces Nitrogen Oxide, a gas that can exacerbate

respiratory ailments. This explains in part the rise of asthma in US children.

A recent study has found that gas stoves are constantly leaking Methane even when they're turned off.

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/science/health/a39036270/gas-stoves-leak-methane/>

Methane is also leaking at an alarming rate from all of those ancient underground pipelines that seemed like such a good idea at the time. Methane is eighty times more destructive to the climate than Carbon. So if we want to turn around climate change in the last few years we have remaining, it seems like Methane would be a good target.

In Wellesley we have more than 220 gas leaks. In the last 5 years or so, National Grid has torn up many of our streets to fix the gas leaks, but we have almost exactly the same number now that we had five years ago, because new leaks keep popping up through our old, corroded pipes. According to a recent study by industry analysts, it could cost upwards of \$20 billion dollars to fix all the leaks.

<https://www.masslive.com/boston/2021/11/more-than-14640-massachusetts-gas-pipeline-repairs-could-cost-billions-of-dollars-just-as-state-looks-to-cut-carbon-emissions-in-half.html>

It's time to walk away from this old technology. Natural gas does not work anymore. It's destroying our climate and our health. We have a better way to heat buildings now. Especially when combined with passive house design and renewable energy, electrification is more efficient than combustion, it's cleaner and healthier, and it's cheaper in the long run. Knowing what we do now, we cannot continue to encourage burning things to keep warm.

So I'm here now asking you, as our public officials, to make your own courageous decision and embrace a true Net Zero building code. The Specialized Opt-In Code should leave no room for combustion of fossil fuels of any kind, regardless of building size, in both new construction and major renovations. The 10 Town gas ban pilot in the Climate Bill sitting on the Governor's desk is simply not enough. If Wellesley can't opt into a fossil fuel

free building code, then we will have to file our own Home Rule Petition to meet our town's emission goals.

In the interests of time, for my remaining comments I submit Sustainable Wellesley's full support for the Net Zero Coalition's Framework of Good, Better, Best.

Thank you.