

From: Sharon Lee <sharonl@lihi.org>
Sent: Friday, February 25, 2022 8:54 AM
To: DES SBCC <sbcc@des.wa.gov>
Cc: Beth Doglio <bethdoglio@gmail.com>; Jon Grant <jon.grant@lihi.org>
Subject: SBCC "Pro" on Electric Heat Pump Proposal

External Email

Dear members of the State Building Code Council,

As the Executive Director of the Low Income Housing Institute I am writing to express support for changes to the state building codes concerning electric heat pumps and greater energy efficiency. This is a common sense proposal that will greatly reduce emissions and mitigate the long term effects of climate change. Recently on December 23, 2021, I authored an Op-Ed in the Seattle Times in support of measures such as this entitled "Addressing the housing and climate crises — together." We know that it is important to act now to address climate change, and doing so does not harm our industry's goals of building more affordable housing.

The Low Income Housing Institute is a leader on the development of affordable housing in the Puget Sound region, owning over 70 properties totaling more than 3,000 units of housing throughout Washington State. Since 2002 we have made a commitment to develop all new properties in accordance with green building principles, such as our June Leonard Place in Renton which uses no fossil fuels and is all electric. We are supporting these changes to the building codes because we have shown that it is possible to make housing affordable and green.

Affordable multifamily housing is crucial to helping low-income residents adapt to the climate crisis - and those residents deserve buildings that will protect their health and safety from air and climate pollution. Low-income residents and other underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by the health impacts of gas – Black, Latinx, Asian, and low-income communities have higher risks of death from particle pollution.

Many low-income households in the Pacific Northwest cannot afford air conditioning, which is essential to keeping vulnerable people safe during increasingly extreme and deadly heat waves. Heat pumps provide both heating and cooling; and strengthening energy codes is a key way to minimize energy waste. Constructing efficient and quality buildings means lower energy bills for our residents.

If we don't help create opportunities for low-income customers to move off fossil fuels now, they will be left holding the bill for any stranded infrastructure down the line after wealthier residents have chosen to move off the gas system. Low-income customers will benefit from robust bill payment assistance programs required by the 2019 Clean Energy Transformation Act.

For all these reasons and more, we strongly encourage you to adopt the proposed measure on electric heat pumps in residential buildings. This is the right move both for our industry, but also our community, our residents, and our planet.

Sincerely,

Sharon Lee

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Sharon H. Lee

Executive Director

Low Income Housing Institute

Please note our new address:

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(206) 443-9935, ext. 1031

(206) 443-9851 fax

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