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BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy opposes Vancouver Councillor's motion to re-impose effective ban on natural gas and force homeowners to buy replacement electric hot water heaters at 2-5 times cost of gas water heaters as of January 1, 2027

BC CADE expects BC Conservative government to stop municipalities from banning gas

VANCOUVER – A motion at Vancouver City Council on Wednesday could force thousands of homeowners to pay 2-5 times more for hot water heater replacement equipment and in operating costs as of January 1, 2027– because it would impose electric-only rules to replace previous natural gas water heaters, says the BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy [BC CADE].

BC CADE Director Bill Tieleman says the motion from OneCity Councillor Lucy Maloney will impose expensive and unnecessary extra costs on about 70,000 single-family and townhouse owners in Vancouver when their existing gas water heaters stop working – because electric hot water heaters cost more initially, will require more installation expenses and higher operating costs.

"This makes no sense because the BC Conservative government's platform clearly states that they will end municipal bans on natural gas – and that's exactly what Vancouver City Councillor Lucy Maloney is trying to do – ban the most affordable and easiest way to replace a gas water heater that stops working," Tieleman said. "There will be about 5,000 homeowners a year needing to replace their previous gas water heater with an electric one – and they will have to pay $5,000 to $10,000 more than necessary to meet Council's demands if this motion passes."

"And if Vancouver continues to effectively ban natural gas and is then overruled by the provincial government, the rules will change again, creating more costs and more uncertainty for homeowners and contractors," Tieleman added. "Driving costs up in Vancouver also encourages residents and businesses to relocate in other nearby municipalities."

BC CADE is one of the province's largest coalitions, representing over 300,000 British Columbians through its members in business, labour and community organizations.

The motion coming up for debate Wednesday at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services would also reverse a motion previously passed in May that said Vancouver would align its building and energy policies with the BC Building Code and end the effective ban on natural gas.

BC CADE says that because of Vancouver's potential motion, Premier-Elect Lorne Doerkson's new government should move quickly to implement its election policy platform that includes moving to: "Build resource infrastructure. We will expand gas transmission and hydrogen infrastructure, **keep natural gas available in every community and stop municipal bans on gas connections and mandatory heating technologies."** [bolding added]

"There are over 30 municipalities, including Vancouver, that have effectively banned natural gas and renewable natural gas from all new construction – homes and businesses – and that's making already expensive housing even more unaffordable without any real impact on climate change," Tieleman said. "The BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy supports choice on energy source, not imposing one form of energy – electricity – as the only choice by law."

BC CADE suggests that the new provincial government quickly rescind the Zero Carbon Step Code provisions of the BC Building Code to restore choice of energy for new construction and end the effective ban on natural gas and renewable natural gas to promote affordability and reliability of energy supply.

"The previous BC government allowed over 30 individual municipalities to adopt Zero Carbon Step Code provisions years ahead of provincial plans, creating a confusing patchwork quilt of regulations that made new housing and business construction more expensive and more complicated," says Tieleman. "It's time to recognize the importance of affordability and dependability by ending the effective ban on natural gas and renewable natural gas in new construction."

BC CADE says early adoption of the Zero Carbon Step Code has by municipalities like Victoria, Richmond, New Westminster and Burnaby has led to different rules for new construction from city to city that cause grief for builders and developers and higher costs for homeowners and businesses.

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Background

The BC Coalition for Affordable Dependable Energy [BC CADE] is a coalition bringing together businesses, business organizations, labour unions, and others to support choice on affordable, dependable energy. Coalition members include:

- Canadian Federation of Independent Business – BC Branch
- Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
- BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association
- BC Chamber of Commerce
- Surrey Board of Trade
- Restaurants Canada
- Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association of Canada
- BC Craft Brewers Guild
- BC Asian Restaurant Cafe Owners Association

- International Union of Electrical Workers Local 213
- UA Local 170
- BC Building Trades
- Mott Electric
- Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating
- The Limona Group
- South Asian Business Association
- Northwest Stoves
- Align West Homes
- Alliance of Beverage Licensees BC
- Concorde Distributing
- Jackson Grills
- Ready Propane
- Napoleon Grills & Fireplaces
- Continental Fireplaces & HVAC
- Valor Radiant Gas Fireplaces
- Pioneer Fireplace
- Maxquip
- Regency Fireplace Products
- Heat Savers
- Burden Propane
- Urban Fireplaces
- Quadra Homes
- Isle of Mann Property Group
- Patriot Homes