

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 17

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: March 18, 2021 8:00 AM

Nathan Lewis

Self- Various Part Time

Lubbock, TX

Strongly disagree. We need to not set up our children for failure. That means we need to move away from natural gas as quickly as humanly possible.

Industry talking points about energy costs aren't some exogenous variable either- you, as lawmakers have control over mandating energy efficiency programs over utility interests, can help to allow interconnection to other grids with projects like the Tres Amigas so cheaper energy could come in during times of shortage -and out during over production, encourage solar and individual homeowner self sufficiency with battery backup, etc...

This article spells it out well.

https://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/commentary/2021/03/12/natural-gas-was-a-big-reason-for-the-blackout-so-why-do-lawmakers-want-to-rely-even-more-on-the-fuel/?outputType=amp&__twitter_impression=true

Kathleen Coyne

self

Austin, TX

The future of our state and planet depends on our ability to curb our emissions - please consider removing this bill from consideration as it directly impacts our ability as Texans to transition to an equitable and just renewable energy economy in this state. What's more, it directly impacts Cities' abilities to appropriately and justly transition their communities to renewable energy, which is supported by the voter base in urban places. Your efforts are hypocritical and contrarian to your "small government" ethos. Thank you for your time.

Mayuri Raja

self

Austin, TX

I am a 22 year old native Texan. I have to live in the world that comes about as a result of the legislation passed and actions taken now, which means that laws like these are dangerous for me. Climate change is real, and we HAVE to fight it. But essentially, this bill upholds the dominance of the gas industry instead of allowing cities to make strides towards lowering carbon emissions. I want to live in a world that isn't completely destroyed by weather disasters and polluted air, but I'm not a government official. I can't fight for the world that I'll have to live in because I don't have that power. Please, please, PLEASE reconsider passing bills such as this one; they might help in the short term during power outages, but ultimately, my generation will have to deal with the long term consequences.

Li-Ya Mar, Dr.

self

ADDISON, TX

Printed on: March 29, 2021 10:20 AM

HB 17 as written would prevent any political subdivision from taking any action that could discriminate against an energy source (such as gas), including educating consumers about good energy choices like electric heat-pumps or tankless water heaters. It could even be interpreted to mean that transit authorities couldn't pursue policies that prevent electrification of vehicles or EV charging stations.

Because HB 17 is written so broadly and has language that would prevent any actions that could be perceived as discriminating against a particular energy source, I urge you to oppose this bill.

Lisa Stone

self: educator

Houston, TX

I join all those asking you to push pause on HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

This bill is so broad that it appears to even ban the use of incentives – such as for energy efficient appliances – and possibly even building codes.

Thanks to advances in technology – particularly heat pumps – all-electric homes are now the most affordable option for new construction. Electric homes are also healthier to live in. Natural gas appliances – especially stoves – create unhealthy indoor air pollution that causes to asthma and other respiratory diseases. Phasing out natural gas for new buildings and providing affordable solutions to retrofit existing buildings will be good for our families.

HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Randolph Streng, Mr.

My Family

Dallas, TX

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue."

Alexis Bruton, Mrs.

Self retired

San Antonio, TX

How dare you impose on us the lies of the natural gas industry. Oppose this bill

Barbara Waite

Self - Retired

Georgetown, TX

I'm writing to ask you to pause action on HB 17. I'm concerned that this bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

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Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration.

John M Milton

Self, engineer

Austin, TX

"OPPOSE HB 17: Quit killing us!!

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Craig Parker

Self, Retired

Fort Worth, TX

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Joshua Seff

Self

McKinney, TX

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Jo Williams

self

Galveston, TX

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B Thompson

SELF

Austin, TX

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SANDY PHILLIPS

Self

Round Rock, TX

This bill does not serve the people, it serves an interest that failed us in the freezing temperatures. Restructure this to allow people to choose if they electrify or not.

Raymond Tarpley

self - retired

College Station, TX

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Kenneth Hayes

Self

Austin, TX

What morons think this industry needs less regulation? Where were they when we were shivering in the dark? Hanging out with Ted Cruz in Cancun? Take this bill and shove it.

Amy Martin

self

Dallas, TX

OPPOSE HB 17 - I'm writing to urge you to push pause on HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections. It offers a solution for a problem that doesn't exist.

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Donna Charter

self

ARLINGTON, TX

You need to put this regulation on hold!! After the natural gas industry left Texans freezing and dying in the cold, we in Texas do not want the energy choice slanted towards to this fossil fuel choice.!

Al Braden

Self

Austin, TX

It is critically important that local cities and counties be able to set their own reasonable utility and building code regulations as the world moves to transition off of fossil fuels. We must be able to restrict the expansion of natural gas fuel services into new areas of development so as to minimize the long term costs to building owners as we transition off these fuels. I oppose this bill. If it does get a hearing, it must also have an amendment for local jurisdictions to make their own energy plans as best suited for their citizens.

Jane Jatinen

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Self

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill as I do not think the legislature should restrict communities for looking out for their citizens. Enough for government interference in the lives of its citizens.

Edward Vaver

self

Plano, TX

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John Young, Mr

self

San Benito, TX

Don't stick our collective heads, including your own head, in gas heated ovens.

The natural gas stakeholders are trying every trick in the book to prevent us as individuals, cities, and counties to transition to healthier, safer, and even more affordable and reliable alternatives. Not just here in Texas but all across our great nation.

Those supporting HB 17 will help destabilize our state government as well as our energy grid as indicated by the widening rift between our Governor and Lt Governor regarding how to prevent future ERGOT meltdowns -- as spelled out in "Some on Wall Street Profited off Texas Blackouts. In a Private Call, a Top Regulator Pledged He Would Try to Protect Their Windfall.," Loren Steffy, 03-16-2021, Texas Monthly, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/wall-street-profited-off-texas-blackouts/>. PUC chairman Arthur D'Andrea's conference call with major natural gas investment stakeholders stinks to high heaven and add to the public distrust of and disgust with our Governors, the PUC, and others seen as selling us out to the natural gas special interest folks.

Especially when combined with stories like "Texas's deregulated electricity market raised consumer costs by \$28B: WSJ," Lexi Lonas, 02-24-2021, The Hill, <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/540271-texass-deregulated-electricity-market-raised-cost-to-consumers-by-28#.YDaBD6ypFrw.twitter>. Plus similar deregulation costs to folks in other states (eg, "Maryland Thought Deregulating Utilities Would Lower Rates. It's Cost the State's Residents Hundreds of Millions of Dollars.," Agya K. Aning, 03-14-2021, InsideClimate News, <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/14032021/maryland-thought-deregulating-utilities-would-lower-rates-its-cost-the-states-residents-hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars/>).

And the coming to light of building codes being used to keep individuals and communities tied to natural gas more as prisoners than as customers ("Cities voted for green building codes. Now developers want to end voting.," Alexander C. Kaufman, 03-01-

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2021, <https://grist.org/politics/minneapolis-building-codes-industry-backlash/>).

For a quick look at the pattern of abuses emerging into wider public view, check out "PSR helps win partial gas ban in Seattle," Physicians for Social Responsibility News Announcement, 02-18-2021, <https://www.psr.org/blog/psr-helps-win-partial-gas-ban-in-seattle/>. Brief quote: "The movement to electrify buildings is heating up nationwide. Local bans on new gas hookups have been passed or are in development in towns and cities in California, New York, Massachusetts, and Washington. The gas industry is pushing back by introducing state-level legislation that would "ban the ban." Arizona, Tennessee, Oklahoma and Louisiana passed bills to that effect in 2020; similar efforts are afoot in Minnesota, Missouri, Kentucky, Georgia and Texas."

John Simmons

self -- retired

Burleson, TX

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Mark Aflatooni

self Business Analyst

Austin, TX

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Susan Finley, Ms.

self

Liberty Hill, TX

I object to legislation that favors industry interests over the wishes of the people and the good of the country. This is not a good bill and will not give us good government.

Jay Curtis

self

Georgetown, TX

Why does the legislature believe it is better suited to determine how local communities choose which energy sources should be encouraged? Granted, very few of us have the financial means to influence legislators, but the natural gas industry should put some effort and funding into providing better alternatives rather than stifling potential competition.

James Hannan

Self

Porter, TX

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Sandra Lynn

Self

Dripping Springs, TX

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Ken Box, Mr.

Self

Austin, TX

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Carrie Schweitzer

Self

Dallas, TX

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But additionally, I oppose HB17 because it is be one of the many "cut and paste" bills now appearing in state legislatures across the country that are pushed, prodded and advocated by many natural gas lobbying organizations, particularly the national American Gas Association. I find these types of bills, whether pushed out by ALEC or other organizations to be insulting to the people of Texas. We deserve more from our state elected leaders. Furthermore, I view HB17 as one more effort in a growing movement to preempt local control of important decisions by citizens and their duly elected city, county and community officials.

This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation in the State of Texas. It deserves your careful scrutiny.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Tadeusz Liszka

self, enginner

Austin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill in its current form. While it appears that this bill may reduce hardship of Texas residents in the event of electric grid failure, this is not a case, as for most residents the gas cannot be used for house heating when electricity is off (it will actually increase chances of fire or CO poisoning if desperate inhabitants use gas in such cases). The restrictions presented in this bill are actually counterproductive, and appear to be promoting use of gas instead of electricity, which is harmful for residents, harmful for the environment, and increasing the danger of climate change.

So this bill does not solve any existing problem, includes unnecessary restrictions, and appears to be helping specific industry under the guise of protecting customer.

Please take time to reconsider this bill, there is no hurry - it does not address any urgent danger or existing emergency.

Respectfully

Tadeusz Liszka

Catherine Croom

self/ retired teacher

Bulverde, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

I'm writing to urge you to oppose HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

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Cheryl Carney, SFC (RET.) USA

Self US Army Retired currently a Pastry Chef

San Antonio, TX

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Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation. FYI, in 2020 I purchased my first all electric car and love it. I can't wait to purchase an EV pickup truck. This year 2021 we capped the gas in our kitchen and went all electric - Range & Over.

Anne Keehnen
Resilient Nacogdoches
Nacogdoches, TX

Please reject House Bill 17. It is completely unnecessary for the State of Texas to try to tell local governments what they should do. This is a bill only to benefits the natural gas industry, and they are doing just fine without it. Although I love my gas heater, I do believe that electricity provides the most affordable and the healthiest type of energy for us in the future. Recognizing that reality, it's time to start phasing out Natural Gas. This bill is so restrictive it can hamper cities abilities to helping citizens in any number of ways. If you feel that you have to support this bill, please consider amending it she allows cities to incentivize the more affordable and healthier electric utilities.

Thomas Curcio
Myself
Buda, TX

HB 17 isn't relevant to the blackout and in fact, it will make Texas less secure from blackouts and while also exacerbating climate change and pollution. HB 17 prevents Texas cities from incentivizing electric appliances in new construction, and potentially from offering any programs to incentivize electric appliances. With public awareness around the benefits and cost lowering aspects of electricity, this bill is ill advised for gaining long term public support. the fossil fuel industry must begin innovating for the benefit of our worlds future. We don't want people in the fossil fuel industry to suffer, we just ask that they begin to recognize the needs and how they can participate in the evolution of the worlds energy source.

Gabrielle Cruz
Jolt Action
Houston, TX

Dear Members of the State Affairs committee,

My name is Gabrielle Cruz and I live in Houston, House District 129.

HB 17 is part of a national effort by the gas industry. It was filed weeks before the blackout started as HB 1282, and it's one of 18 copycat bills across the country written by the American Gas Association to boost profits for gas utilities. Centerpoint Energy (Houston) CPS Energy (San Antonio) and Atmos Energy (Dallas) are all part of the AGA - meaning that they're using customer

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money to fund this 18-state lobbying campaign. These three companies have a monopoly over gas distribution in their respective cities.

The American Gas Association's strategy is to target African American lawmakers and get them to author the bills across the country, touting it as a cost-savings bill for low income residents. Representative Deshotel is leading the effort in Texas by authoring the bill; Rep Deshotel has received \$9,500 in campaign contributions from Centerpoint Energy and \$4,000 from Texas Oil and Gas Association.

The truth is that more natural gas appliances would not have helped during the blackout - critical natural gas infrastructure froze during the winter storm! But HB 17 wants to lock customers into gas appliances - removing customer choice. Not only does this bill strip the local government of their power to incentivize electrification but it also locks us into an energy source that is harmful to our health and our planet.

Fracked gas appliances – particularly gas stoves – cause dangerous indoor air pollution. Gas stoves often cause indoor air pollution at levels that would be illegal outside.

Fracked gas use in homes and businesses is a significant driver of climate change.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 17. If the majority of the committee members intend to vote 'yes' on this bill then at least make an amendment and add the following sections to HB 17

(e) This section does not limit the ability of a regulatory authority or political subdivision, including a municipal electric utility, to implement:

(1) educational programs and financial incentives that provide customers with the opportunity to install more energy-efficient appliances and devices;

(2) amendments to building-codes that encourage the construction of more energy-efficient buildings, and the incorporation of new technology such as solar, demand response, heat pumps or electric vehicles, provided that developers have options to use different sources of energy;

(3) green-building practices and programs, including those that set net-zero energy or net-zero carbon goals for new construction, provided that options are provided to builders for the use of different sources of energy where access to such sources exist.

Thank you,

GC

Jeanne Devine

Self, retired clergy

Austin, TX

This is a solution in search of a problem. No city has remotely suggested banning gas-powered appliances. This is yet another example of top-down regulation by the state, imposed on cities. Please do everyone a favor and do not advance this bill. If you are determined to protect natural gas, focus more narrowly on that subject; the industry will appreciate anything you can do, I'm sure.

Beverly Walker, Ms

self

Kingsland, TX

This doesn't sound right. We need environmentally responsible utilities, we need thoughtful, resource-sensitive options and progressive thinking, not more of the same old destructive policies.

Anil Prabhakar

self; engineer

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Cedar Park, TX

OPPOSE HB 17 - I'm writing to urge you to push pause on HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

This bill is so broad that it appears to even ban the use of incentives – such as for energy efficient appliances – and possibly even building codes.

Thanks to advances in technology – particularly heat pumps – all-electric homes are now the most affordable option for new construction. Electric homes are also healthier to live in. Natural gas appliances – especially stoves – create unhealthy indoor air pollution that causes to asthma and other respiratory diseases. Phasing out natural gas for new buildings and providing affordable solutions to retrofit existing buildings will be good for our families.

HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Kelli Reid

self, fitness instructor

The Colony, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

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Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation.

Darren Huff

self Consulting

Round Rock, TX

OPPOSE HB 17 - I'm writing to urge you to pause on HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But, no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

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Thanks to advances in technology (particularly heat pumps), all-electric homes are now the most affordable option for new construction. Electric homes are also healthier to live in. Natural gas appliances--especially stoves--create unhealthy indoor air pollution that causes asthma and other respiratory diseases. Phasing out natural gas for new buildings, and providing affordable solutions to retrofit existing buildings will be good for our families.

HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. Nevertheless, if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that--not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

Charles Bell

Self - Grocery Stocker, College Student

Fort Worth, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

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Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Clyde Boyce, Advisory Board

EV Chargers and Installation

Murchison, TX

Please do not pass HN17. It would cease to allow communities from restricting of natural gas exploration in cities. Rather than reward fossil fuel usage, invent the use of sustainable energy such as EV's and EV chargers.

Jacqueline Bastard

Jolt Action, Inc.

Houston, TX

My name is Jackie Bastard and I live in Houston, in HD 14. Many of us across the state were severely affected by the winter storm and some Texans lost their lives. As you and your fellow members of the legislature work diligently to ensure this does not happen again, I would like for you all to take a harder and more skeptical look at HB 17 before allowing it to be voted out of committee. HB 17 is not only relevant to the blackout and in fact, it will make Texas less secure from blackouts while also exacerbating climate change and pollution. HB 17 prevents Texas cities from incentivizing electric appliances in new construction, and potentially from offering programs to incentivize electric appliances. This bill is being introduced throughout the US was filed weeks before the blackout started as HB 1282, and it's one of 18 copycat bills across the country written by the American Gas Association (AGA) to boost profits for gas utilities. Centerpoint Energy (Houston) CPS Energy (San Antonio) and

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Atmos Energy (Dallas) are all part of the AGA - and using customer money to fund this 18-state lobbying campaign. The AGA's strategy is to target African American lawmakers and get them to author the bills across the country, touting it as a cost-savings bill for low income residents. The truth is that more natural gas appliances would not have helped during the blackout - critical natural gas infrastructure froze during the winter storm! But HB 17 wants to lock customers into gas appliances - removing customer choice. Not only does this bill strip the local government of their power to incentivize electrification but it also locks us into an energy source that is harmful to our health and our planet. Fracked gas appliances - particularly gas stoves - cause dangerous indoor air pollution. Gas stoves often cause indoor air pollution at levels that would be illegal outside. Fracked gas use in homes and businesses is a significant driver of climate change.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 17. If majority of the committee members intend to vote 'yes' then I urge to make an amendment and add the following sections to HB 17: (e) This section does not limit the ability of a regulatory authority or political subdivision, including a municipal electric utility, to implement:

- (1) educational programs and financial incentives that provide customers with the opportunity to install more energy-efficient appliances and devices;
- (2) amendments to building-codes that encourage the construction of more energy-efficient buildings, and the incorporation of new technology such as solar, demand response, heat pumps or electric vehicles, provided that developers have options to use different sources of energy;
- (3) green-building practices and programs, including those that set net-zero energy or net-zero carbon goals for new construction, provided that options are provided to builders for the use of different sources of energy where access to such sources exist.

Thank you.

Patricia Zavala

Jolt Action

Austin, TX

Dear Members of the State Affairs committee,

My name is Patricia Zavala and I live in Austin, House District and I urge you to oppose HB 17. HB 17 is being proposed as part of a package of bills that would solve the issues that arose during the winter storm. However, HB 17 isn't relevant to the blackout and in fact, it will make Texas less secure from blackouts and while also exacerbating climate change and pollution.

This pre-emption bill is introduced at state legislative bodies throughout the US as a reaction to efforts by certain cities to move toward electrification of buildings and appliances.

HB 17 is part of a national effort by the gas industry. It was filed weeks before the blackout started as HB 1282, and it's one of 18 copycat bills across the country written by the American Gas Association to boost profits for gas utilities. Centerpoint Energy (Houston) CPS Energy (San Antonio) and Atmos Energy (Dallas) are all part of the AGA - meaning that they're using customer money to fund this 18-state lobbying campaign.

The American Gas Association's strategy is to target African American lawmakers and ask them to author the bills across the country, touting it as a cost-savings bill for low income residents. Representative Deshotel is leading the effort in Texas by authoring the bill; Rep Deshotel received \$9,500 in campaign contributions from Centerpoint Energy and \$4,000 from Texas Oil and Gas Association.

Fracked gas appliances - particularly gas stoves - cause dangerous indoor air pollution. Gas stoves often cause indoor air pollution at levels that would be illegal outside.

Fracked gas use in homes and businesses is a significant driver of climate change.

As part of their climate responsibility, cities are looking at ways - in future construction - to lower pollution from fracked gas and encourage the use of electric energy-efficient appliances. Local governments need to be able to respond to their constituents' concerns about the inherent problems of fracked gas and the state should not get in the way.

I urge you to vote NO on HB 17 or at least make an amendment and add following sections to HB 17

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James Ryon

James Ryon and Maria Dolores Saenz

Corinth, TX

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HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation.

I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Sandra Woodall, Mrs.

Self. Retired

San Antonio, TX

OPPOSE HB 17 - I'm writing to urge you to push pause on HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

I thought Texas protected the autonomy of counties and cities. This bill demands everyone march in lockstep. I am shocked.

Garry Kramchak, Mr.

Retired

Houston, TX

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Wayne Stalsworth, Mr
self
Seguin, TX

It IS regulation if you say I can't endorse Electrical Appliances. Vote NO!

Alyssa Melton, Mrs
Self
Arlington, TX

Please reject HB 17. Natural gas is not the answer for weathering storms. Instead we should be winterizing both solar and wind power to withstand extremes of heat and cold.

Cris Nelson, Mr.
self - Facility Technician
Austin, TX

HB 17 is a bill searching for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

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Janelle Murphy
Self, biologist
Galveston, TX

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Mona Mehdy
self, professor
Austin, TX

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HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17.

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Sophia Vassilakidis, Ms.

self - customer service

Houston, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

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Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation. Thank you.

Greg Sells-

self

Austin, TX

Either reject HB 17 or change it to be more reasonable. Natural gas is not an entirely clean fuel, because large amounts of polluting methane are released during production, and gas stoves often cause indoor air pollution at levels that are considered unacceptable. For new buildings, all-electric is the most affordable option to build and to operate. Natural gas bans around the country apply only to new construction, not forcing the removal of gas appliances from existing structures. HB 17 is not a response to the winter storms because it was filed long before then.

John Weber

NA

Corpus Christi, TX

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There is no reason for this bill. There is no threat of people's choice in using gas or not. Local control is very important for functional city and county governments. Gas in houses is also the biggest cause of indoor air pollution and the respiratory disease that comes along with it.

Brent Bennett, Dr.

Texas Public Policy Foundation, Life:Powered

Austin, TX

Chairman Paddie and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 17. I am the Policy Director of Life:Powered, an initiative of the Texas Public Policy Foundation to raise America's energy IQ. We support this bill because cities' unilateral bans on certain types of utilities will place a financial strain on Texans in poverty while providing no tangible environmental benefits.

Following in the footsteps of Berkeley, San Francisco, and other California cities, Austin and other Texas municipalities are considering natural gas utilities for new homes and businesses. While these policies satisfy environmental groups and other political constituencies, recent polling shows that nearly 70% of Texans oppose them.

The cost to convert a home from gas to electric heating and to change out appliances runs in the thousands of dollars. Also, the cost of natural gas heating is usually cheaper than electric, and many homeowners may want to use natural gas as a hedge against the likelihood of rising electric bills. These costs have the greatest effect on the people who can least afford them. A recent study by the Home Builders Association found that for every \$1,000 increase in the price of a home, over 11,000 Texans are priced out of the market.

Additionally, banning natural gas would produce no measurable impact on the global climate. Climate models show that eliminating all U.S. fossil fuel consumption by 2030 would alter global temperatures by less than two-tenths of a degree. No U.S. city's actions will make a significant difference when the vast majority of future greenhouse gas emissions will come from the developing world.

On a more micro scale, even if we use the Biden administration's \$51/ton social cost of carbon, eliminating the emissions from an average home's natural gas usage will only bring \$81 per year in climate benefits. If going electric will save consumers money, they will chose to do so on their own. Forcing such a change in the name of negligible environmental benefits is harmful policy.

There are many precedents for curtailing municipal overreach and preventing a patchwork quilt of unpredictable and harmful city ordinances. Texas stopped Denton Texas stopped Denton's fracking ban in 2015 and Austin's ridesharing ordinances in 2017. Our position is that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality should be the sole regulator of greenhouse gas emissions and that cities acting unilaterally to ban fossil fuels would have harmful effects not just on their residents but on the entire state.

We commend Rep. Deshotel for introducing this bill and hope the committee will consider it thoughtfully. We should not allow cities to limit consumer choice, drive up housing prices, and enact patchwork environmental policies that will bring no tangible benefits.

Sincerely,

Brent Bennett, Ph.D.

Policy Director, Life:Powered
Texas Public Policy Foundation

Kathryne Bartlett

First Methodist Church, Weatherford

Weatherford, TX

We, customers & citizens, should NOT be restricted to only 1 type of utility, whether electric or gas or ??.. It is our right to choose.. Even in the recent freeze this should be evident that we need 2 utilities to use..

Shawn Troxell, Ms.

Self

New Braunfels, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue."

Mary Cato, Ms

self - retired

Arlington, TX

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Ari Meyer

self, computer programmer

Austin, TX

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Frances Lovett

self

Comfort, TX

I object to HB 17 and the idea of regulating/limiting service options for public utilities and thus the consumer. Additionally, natural gas is a polluting fuel source and is a detriment to Texas air quality.

Frances Lovett

Dale Ryder

self

San Marcos, TX

OPPOSE HB 17

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Arthur Simon

self, artist

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Austin, TX

I oppose this bill because it undermines a city's ability to build its own electrical infrastructure.

James Klein

Clean Economy Coalition

Corpus Christi, TX

I'm writing in opposition to HB 17. This bill would place wide-ranging restrictions on local governments, under the guise of protecting customer access to natural gas. But no Texas city has even considered banning natural gas connections.

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I look forward to hearing from you about this issue."

Thanks again for your support,

Sean Hunt, Mr.

self, landscape architect

Argyle, TX

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JAMES DEELY

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SELF LAWYER

SAN ANTONIO, TX

THIS LEGISLATION IS HARMFUL TO TEXANS

Paresh Patel

e^2: equitable energy

Katy, TX

HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. But if you think it's important to ensure that no Texas city bans natural gas, adopt a committee substitute to do that – not the overly broad and restrictive language currently in HB 17. Please take your time on this issue. This bill does not address any emergency or urgent situation. I look forward to hearing from you about this issue.

Alexander Montalvo

self, consultant

Fort Worth, TX

My name is Alexander Montalvo. I'm a Texan living in Fort Worth and my zip code is 76116. I urge you to oppose House Bill 17. This bill's stated intention is to protect customer access to natural gas, but no city in Texas has even considered banning natural gas connections. HB 17 is a bill offering a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. And it would place unnecessary, wide-ranging restrictions on local governments.

This bill is so broad that it seems to even ban the use of incentives for energy efficient appliances. Thanks to advances in technology – particularly heat pumps – all-electric homes are now the most affordable option for new construction. Electric homes are also healthier to live in.

Natural gas appliances – especially stoves – create unhealthy indoor air pollution that can cause asthma and other respiratory diseases. Phasing out natural gas for new buildings and providing affordable solutions to retrofit existing buildings will be good for Texan families.

Please vote NO on HB 17!

Rachel Carneglia

self

AUSTIN, TX

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This bill is so broad that it seems to even ban the use of incentives for energy efficient appliances. Thanks to advances in technology – particularly heat pumps – all-electric homes are now the most affordable option for new construction. Electric homes are also healthier to live in, while natural gas appliances, especially stoves, create unhealthy indoor air pollution that can cause asthma and other respiratory diseases. Phasing out natural gas for new buildings and providing affordable solutions to retrofit existing buildings will be good for Texan families.

Mary Montalvo

Self

Fort Worth, TX

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Ed Perry

Guadalupe Soccer Academy

New Braunfels, TX

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