

# END THE BAN ON NATURAL GAS

CLEAN ENERGY CHOICE

## Decarbonization Plan Risks Reliability, Compromises Jobs, and Hurts Consumers

THE PEOPLE OF CHICAGO DESERVE A DECARBONIZATION PLAN THAT PRIORITIZES AFFORDABILITY, JOB SECURITY, AND EQUITY—NOT ONE THAT HAPHAZARDLY IMPOSES AN UNFUNDED GOVERNMENT MANDATE THAT RISKS POWER GRID RELIABILITY, COMPROMISES GOOD-PAYING JOBS, AND INCREASES UTILITY BILLS.

CHICAGO IS ALREADY GRAPPLING WITH RISING ELECTRICITY COSTS. OVERBURDENED HOUSEHOLDS ARE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET. ACCORDING TO RECENT DATA, ELECTRICITY RATES FOR HOUSEHOLDS IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS SURGED BY 14% LAST SUMMER.

A BAN ON NATURAL GAS CONNECTIONS WOULD NOT ONLY DISRUPT THE CURRENT ENERGY LANDSCAPE, BUT IT WOULD ALSO JEOPARDIZE JOBS. THE NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY EMPLOYS THOUSANDS OF UNION WORKERS IN MIDDLE-CLASS CAREERS. THE CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE (CABO) WOULD PUT THE LIVELIHOODS OF THESE RESIDENTS AT RISK.

AGAINST THESE RISING COSTS, PROPONENTS PROPOSED CABO, A FORCED TRANSITION TO ALL-ELECTRIC SYSTEMS IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS THROUGHOUT THE CITY—BANNING NATURAL GAS CONNECTIONS. WHILE THE PROPOSAL IS COMMENDABLE IN ITS ENVIRONMENTAL ASPIRATIONS, CABO RAISES SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS ABOUT RELIABILITY, PUTTING RESIDENTS OUT OF WORK, AND DEEPENING INEQUITIES ACROSS CHICAGO.

THE RELIABILITY OF CHICAGO'S POWER GRID IS A PRESSING ISSUE, AND MOVING FROM NATURAL GAS TO ALL-ELECTRIC IS COSTLY. WITH LESS THAN 4% OF THE CITY'S ELECTRICITY CURRENTLY SOURCED FROM RENEWABLES, SUCH A SUDDEN SHIFT COULD STRAIN THE GRID BEYOND CAPACITY. HOUSEHOLDS USING NATURAL GAS FOR HEATING SAVE AN AVERAGE OF \$1,132 PER YEAR COMPARED TO THEIR ALL-ELECTRIC COUNTERPARTS. THE CITY'S OWN PROJECTIONS INDICATE ASTRONOMICAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS TO TRANSITION—UP TO \$60 BILLION TO CONVERT CHICAGO'S HOMES AND BUSINESSES. THESE COSTS WOULD BE PASSED ON TO CHICAGOANS, FURTHER BURDENING THEM WITH HIGHER UTILITY BILLS.

MOREOVER, THROUGH THIS MANDATE, COMED WOULD BECOME A SUPER-MONOPOLY, DELIVERING BOTH ELECTRICITY AND HEAT IN THE CITY. COMED IS NOT PREPARED TO HEAT HOMES IN CHICAGO WITH ITS CURRENT ELECTRIC GRID AND, BY ITS OWN ADMISSION, RECOGNIZED THAT THERE IS A DISCONNECT BETWEEN ITS SERVICE AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES IN THE CITY. PUT SIMPLY, WITH HIGHER COSTS AND SUBPAR SERVICE, THIS ORDINANCE WILL HURT LOW-INCOME FAMILIES MOST.

MONOPOLIES STIFLE INNOVATION, EXPLOIT CONSUMERS, AND UNDERMINE LABOR RIGHTS—ALL THE THINGS THAT RUN COUNTER TO THE DECARBONIZATION PLAN WE BELIEVE CHICAGO DESERVES. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR DIVERSIFYING SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SOURCES BEYOND JUST ELECTRIFICATION IS CRUCIAL FOR ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE.

RESIDENTS SHOULD HAVE A VOICE IN HOW THEY WANT TO HEAT THEIR HOMES. RIGHT NOW, 8-IN-10 ILLINOIS HOUSEHOLDS USE NATURAL GAS FOR HEATING.

## Alderpeople Authoring This Op-Ed

BRIAN HOPKINS – 2ND WARD, PAT DOWELL – 3RD WARD, GREG MITCHELL – 7TH WARD, MICHELLE HARRIS – 8TH WARD, ANTHONY BEALE – 9TH WARD, PETER CHICO – 10TH WARD, NICOLE LEE – 11TH WARD, MARTY QUINN – 13TH WARD, RAY LOPEZ – 15TH WARD, STEPHANIE COLEMAN – 16TH WARD, DAVID MOORE – 17TH WARD, DERRICK CURTIS – 18TH WARD, MATT O'SHEA – 19TH WARD, RONNIE MOSLEY – 21ST WARD, SILVANA TABARES – 23RD WARD, MONIQUE SCOTT – 24TH WARD, WALTER BURNETT – 27TH WARD, JASON ERVIN – 28TH WARD, CHRIS TALIAFERRO – 29TH WARD, RUTH CRUZ – 30TH WARD, FELIX CARDONA – 31ST WARD, SCOTT WAGUESPACK – 32ND WARD, BILL CONWAY – 34TH WARD, GIL VILLEGAS – 36TH WARD, EMMA MITTS – 37TH WARD, NICK SPOSATO – 38TH WARD, SAM NUGENT – 39TH WARD, ANTHONY NAPOLITANO – 41ST WARD, BRENDAN REILLY – 42ND WARD, JAMES GARDINER – 45TH WARD, DEBRA SILVERSTEIN – 50TH WARD

## 2/3 OF CHICAGO'S CITY COUNCIL AGREES, BANNING NATURAL GAS IS NOT THE WAY FORWARD.

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*Alderpeople*

SHARE THE OPINION WE MUST  
HAVE A **REAL PLAN** TO  
DECARBONIZE CHICAGO,  
READ THEIR OP-ED

A DECEMBER POLL FOUND THAT 72% OF CHICAGO VOTERS WANT A GRADUAL CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION RATHER THAN A RAPID BAN ON GAS. HOMEOWNERS WHO WANT TO CONVERT THEIR HOMES TO ALL-ELECTRIC CAN ALREADY JOIN INCENTIVE PROGRAMS THROUGH COMED AND THE FEDERAL INFLATION REDUCTION ACT TO MAKE RETROFITTING MORE AFFORDABLE.

ADDITIONALLY, IN A RECENT DEVELOPMENT, THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT OVERTURNED THE CITY OF BERKELEY'S BAN ON NATURAL GAS INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED BUILDINGS. A PARALLEL LAWSUIT IN NEW YORK, AND THE CALIFORNIA CASE, SET A PRECEDENT WITH NATIONWIDE IMPLICATIONS, RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VIABILITY OF THIS PROPOSED UNFUNDED GOVERNMENT MANDATE.

**AS ELECTED OFFICIALS, WE HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT PRIORITIZE THE WELL-BEING OF OUR CONSTITUENTS, WHILE ADVANCING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS. CABO FALLS SHORT OF MEETING THESE CRITERIA.** WE URGE CITY LEADERSHIP TO HEED THE CONCERNS RAISED BY ELECTED OFFICIALS, UTILITY COMPANIES, LABOR UNIONS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND WORK TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FUTURE THAT TRULY SERVES THE INTERESTS OF CHICAGOANS.

RATHER THAN RUSHING TO ADOPT CABO BY IMPOSING AN UNFUNDED GOVERNMENT MANDATE, WHILE LIMITING CONSTITUENTS ENERGY OPTIONS, WE PROPOSE EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS. THE RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE BUILDING WEATHERIZATION, EXPANDING ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE, ELECTRIFYING THE CITY FLEET, AND BOLSTERING FUNDING FOR MASS TRANSIT. THESE MEASURES OFFER MORE INCLUSIVE AND PRACTICAL PATHWAYS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY, REDUCE EMISSIONS, AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

WE NEED TO PRIORITIZE A PRACTICAL APPROACH THAT ENSURES ENERGY RELIABILITY, AFFORDABILITY, AND JOB SECURITY AS WE WORK TO MEET THE STATE'S CLIMATE AND EQUITABLE JOBS ACT (CEJA) GOALS OF BECOMING 100% CARBON-FREE BY 2045. WE STAND READY TO COLLABORATE WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP BOLD SOLUTIONS THAT MEANINGFULLY ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE, WHILE SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF CHICAGO RESIDENTS.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT CITY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**

SCAN TO READ  
THE OP-ED  
ONLINE

