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TESTIMONY OF THE ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE ALLIANCE

**Before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs**

**Hearing: “No Flame, More Pain: How State and Local Bans on Natural Gas Increase Costs”
September 2, 2026**

Chairman Burlison, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance (EEIA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the District of Columbia’s restrictions on the use of natural gas in new buildings. EEIA represents contractors, equipment manufacturers and dealers, materials suppliers and service providers supporting the construction, operation and maintenance of America’s energy infrastructure.

EEIA opposes policies that prohibit or unnecessarily restrict access to natural gas. The District’s policy removes an energy choice from consumers and builders at a time when households and businesses are increasingly concerned about energy and housing costs. Beginning after December 31, 2026, covered new construction and additions greater than 10,000 square feet cannot receive building permits if designed to use on-site fuel combustion for space or water heating.[1]

Affordability Should Come First

Natural gas has long provided an abundant and economical source of energy for American households and businesses. Washington is particularly well situated geographically, with enormous natural gas resources in the nearby Appalachian region.

District residents already rely heavily on this resource. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports that almost half of District households use natural gas for home heating. The commercial sector accounts for nearly three-fifths of D.C. natural gas deliveries.[2] EIA counted more than 153,000 residential and 10,000 commercial natural gas consumers in the District in 2024.[3]

These numbers demonstrate that natural gas is not a marginal component of Washington’s energy system. It is an important source of energy for homes, apartments, restaurants, hotels, offices and government facilities.

The economic problem with banning its use in new buildings is straightforward: eliminating an energy option does not eliminate energy demand. It shifts that demand to another system.

In this case, that system is electricity.

Electrification Requires Expensive Infrastructure

Electricity does not arrive at a building without extensive infrastructure. Growing electric demand requires generation, transmission lines, substations, transformers, switchgear and distribution facilities. Those facilities must be permitted, financed, constructed, operated and maintained.

Ultimately, consumers pay for them.

This is particularly relevant in Washington because the District generates very little electricity. EIA reports that approximately 98 percent of the electricity consumed in D.C. comes from generating facilities in surrounding states.[2]

At the same time, the regional electric grid faces rapidly increasing demand from data centers, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing, transportation electrification and other new loads.

Against that backdrop, public policy should be cautious about deliberately shifting additional building-energy demand onto the electric system when an extensive natural gas delivery network already exists.

Natural gas pipelines are themselves valuable energy infrastructure. Maintaining both gas and electric delivery systems gives consumers choices and provides the overall energy system with greater flexibility.

Let Technologies Compete

EEIA does not oppose electrification or electric heat pumps. Modern heat pumps are highly efficient and can be an excellent choice for many buildings.

But encouraging heat pumps is fundamentally different from prohibiting natural gas.

The economics of building-energy systems depend on construction costs, equipment costs, electric-service requirements, utility rates, operating patterns and maintenance expenses. No single technology will necessarily provide the lowest total cost for every apartment building, restaurant, office, hotel or commercial property.

Technology-neutral policy allows natural gas equipment, heat pumps and other systems to compete based on actual economics, efficiency and performance.

A prohibition eliminates that competition.

Consumers ordinarily benefit from competition. Energy should be no exception.

Housing and Small-Business Costs Matter

Washington already faces substantial housing-affordability challenges. Developers confront high land, labor, materials, financing and regulatory costs. Requirements that necessitate greater electrical capacity, larger service equipment or other building infrastructure can add further costs.

Those costs do not disappear. They can ultimately be reflected in rents, purchase prices or reduced investment in new housing.

The same concern applies to small businesses.

Natural gas remains particularly important to many restaurants and other establishments requiring significant amounts of thermal energy. Restaurant owners should be allowed to determine whether gas or electric equipment best meets their operational and economic requirements.

Small businesses already face rising costs for labor, food, rent, insurance and utilities. Government should be reluctant to eliminate an established energy option that a business may determine is the most economical way to operate.

Natural Gas and Electricity Work Together

The debate also creates an artificial distinction between natural gas and electricity.

They are interconnected energy systems. Natural gas remains an important fuel for electricity generation throughout the region supplying Washington. Electrifying a building therefore does not necessarily eliminate natural gas from the energy supply chain. It may simply move where that gas is consumed while adding reliance on generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure.

This is another reason policymakers should focus on outcomes—affordability, efficiency, reliability and emissions—rather than mandate one technology.

America's abundant natural gas supply is an enormous economic advantage. It has supported lower energy costs, domestic manufacturing, energy security and economic growth.

Consumers should be allowed to benefit from that advantage.

Energy Choice Is the Better Policy

The District can pursue energy efficiency without prohibiting natural gas. It can require efficient building envelopes, encourage high-efficiency equipment, promote heat pumps where economical, and establish technology-neutral performance standards.

None of these policies requires eliminating consumer choice.

For EEIA members, the infrastructure needed to meet America's energy needs is not theoretical. Our members provide the construction expertise, equipment, materials and services necessary to build and maintain it. We see firsthand the investment required to expand energy infrastructure.

With electricity demand growing rapidly, America needs more energy infrastructure and greater energy diversity—not policies that unnecessarily concentrate still more demand on a single energy-delivery system.

Washington residents deserve affordable and reliable energy. Builders should be able to select systems appropriate for their projects. Businesses should have flexibility to choose equipment that meets their needs. Families should have access to the energy source providing the greatest value for their household budgets.

Natural gas provides one of those choices.

The District should not take it away.

EEIA urges policymakers to reject natural gas bans and instead support technology-neutral policies promoting efficiency, reliability, competition and consumer choice.

Energy affordability is strengthened by competition. Energy reliability is strengthened by diversity. Consumers are best served when they—not government mandates—can choose the energy solution that works best for them.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance (EEIA)

Toby Mack, President and CEO

Sources

[1] District of Columbia Code § 6-1453.01, *Net-zero-energy building code requirements*, including the requirement applicable to permit applications submitted after December 31, 2026.

[2] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *District of Columbia State Energy Profile*: approximately 98 percent of District electricity comes from surrounding states; almost half of District households rely on natural gas for home heating; the commercial sector accounts for nearly three-fifths of District natural gas deliveries.

[3] U.S. Energy Information Administration, *District of Columbia Number of Natural Gas Consumers*: 153,561 residential and 10,040 commercial consumers in 2024.