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The Honorable Randy K. Weber

1. “I am extremely concerned about the attack on the use of natural gas in homes and buildings across our country. Legislation from this committee to protect consumers’ choice to purchase gas appliances has passed the House, unfortunately without much support from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. What are the impacts to future homeowners who may not have access to natural gas in their homes?”

Answer: Constraints on energy sourcing have already demonstrated their disruptive nature as witnessed by natural gas and electrical markets, particularly in the western markets where supply is further throttled by generating and delivery infrastructure. The western U.S. energy market is currently vulnerable to supply and demand characteristics that have arisen due to the retirement of coal as an energy source. Renewables are now a large contributor to energy generation, however they do not offer feasible base load capabilities when the weather does not co-operate. Natural gas has replaced coal as the de facto base load energy source meaning that when weather does not co-operate, utilities turn to gas fired turbines to generate electricity. This, in turn puts more pressure on natural gas as a resource and escalates gas pricing (Southern California pricing in Jan. 2023 \$54.00 per MMBTU highest price on the planet). Banning or reducing access to natural gas as a residential fuel source will have the following likely impacts:

a. Overall energy costs will increase to the home owner because:

- i. Natural gas will be burned by the major utilities to generate more electricity for the increased demand from home owners, and;
- ii. Electrical conversion to heat homes is less efficient (without significant investment) than gas heat which will require more electricity generation, and;
- iii. Electrical utilities will have, in effect, a monopoly when it comes to powering our homes.

b. Energy security in the home will decrease because:

- i. Electrical grids are already strained to provide constant service during high demand periods, and;
- ii. Existing residential gas infrastructure will be abandoned, and;
- iii. EV mandates, for both personal and commercial vehicles, data server farms, and AI will strain electrical grids even more, reducing home energy security and;
- iv. Electrical grids fail, often during times of severe weather, leaving homeowners to either burn wood, run gasoline/diesel generators, or freeze.

c. Cost of new home construction/ownership will increase because:

- i. High efficiency electrical heating systems (heat pumps) are more costly to install and operate than gas fired furnaces, and;
- ii. High efficiency electrical systems can struggle to maintain comfortable heat levels during extreme cold, and;

- iii. High efficiency electrical systems do not have the same lifespan as gas fired furnaces (as little as 50% of the life span of a gas furnace) adding to the cost of ownership.

In short, banning natural gas usage in homes is a significant change in residential energy diversity which will further strain our existing energy infrastructure, cause more natural gas to be burned (to generate electricity), add to the cost of home construction/ownership, reduce competition in energy sourcing, encourage wood burning or onsite usage of fossil fuels, increase overall utility costs and put families in real jeopardy during extreme weather events.