

Sustainability Office

Troy Moon
Sustainability Director



To: Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and members of the State and Local Government Committee

From: Troy Moon, Sustainability Director

Date: March 16, 2023

Regarding: City of Portland, Maine testimony to the State of Maine 131st Legislature's JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES in OPPOSITION TO LD 891, "An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor."

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the City of Portland in opposition to LD 894 *"An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor."*

Summary:

Decarbonizing existing buildings and ending the installation of fossil fuel infrastructure in new construction are two important strategies described in the City's climate action plan, One Climate Future. If LD 894 were to be adopted, it would infringe on the City of Portland's ability to regulate fossil fuel infrastructure and jeopardize our ability to meet the greenhouse gas reduction targets established by the City Council. These include Resolve 9-17/18, A Resolution Adopting a Goal to Reduce Citywide Greenhouse Gas Emissions 80% by 2050, and Order 123-20/21, Approving the One Climate Future Climate Action and Adaptation Plan.

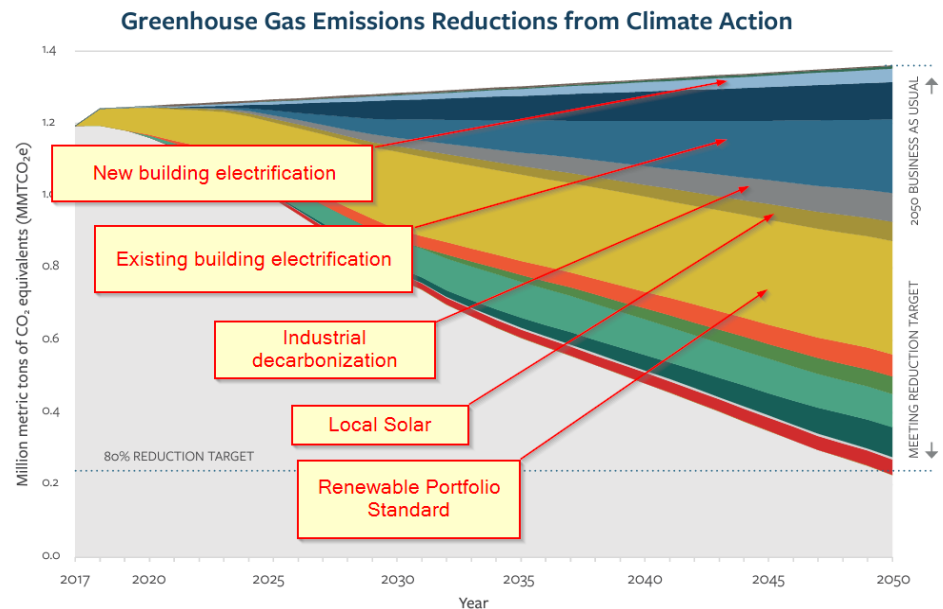
Discussion:

45% of Portland's emissions are attributable to the combustion of natural gas and fuel oil in buildings. Transitioning all buildings and most industrial processes to run on electricity instead of fossil fuels is the foundation upon which the City's climate action plan rests. This is possible because the State has adopted a 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which is a statute that requires the electric grid to be powered by 80% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% renewable energy by 2050. Installation of local, behind-the-meter solar enhances this policy and reduces overall demand on the grid. The greening grid provides an opportunity to decarbonize buildings and transportation by adopting beneficial electrification. The wedge graph below shows the cumulative impact of several of the decarbonization policy actions necessary to achieve our GHG reduction goal and demonstrates the vital importance of beneficial electrification to achieve our goals.

Policies like LD 984 that protect incumbent fossil fuel infrastructure would impede beneficial electrification and leave us far short of achieving our climate goals by 2050.

The City's climate action plan, One Climate Future, has two chapters devoted specifically to adopting policies that limit the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure deployed in the City of Portland.

The first is BE 3.4, which calls for transitioning existing single family homes, multifamily buildings, and commercial buildings from fuel oil to all electric heating and cooling. The second is BE 5.6, which explicitly calls for a phase-out of natural gas infrastructure in new construction.



The greenhouse gas modeling for One Climate Future shows that, to achieve One Climate Future goals, virtually all residential and commercial buildings must be transitioned to renewable sources of heating and cooling by 2050. Installing fossil fuel infrastructure in new buildings makes it difficult and costly to transition buildings to renewable energy sources within the 2050 timeline. Requiring new construction and buildings undergoing major renovations to install electric infrastructure instead of fossil fuel infrastructure helps achieve the City's climate goals and eliminates future expenses to decarbonizing that building.

Opposing LD 984 preserves the City's home rule authority and maintains the City Council's ability to adopt policies to decarbonize buildings with clean, renewable electricity.

Sincerely,

Troy Moon
Sustainability Director