

From: Richard Morley Barron <rmorleybarron@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, December 05, 2022 10:01 PM

To: Planning <Planning@a2gov.org>

Subject: Keeping fossil gas in the ground

I am writing to urge the AA Planning Commission to do what is necessary for our planet as well as for our City by moving to close the shut-off valve on “clean” “natural” gas at Tuesday’s meeting.

Doing so will unleash the anger of many powerful interests who will insist that we need to continue to use fossil fuels to power our lives and that we should put off the transition to renewable energy to some future date. They will insist, accurately, that most citizens in AA rely on fossil gas to heat their homes, their water and their food and that a quick transition to renewable energy will be disruptive and very challenging. They will ask you all to trust them.

What they surely will not tell you is that this transition to carbon-free power is not premature but rather far too late. We all have failed to act primarily because greenhouse gases are invisible and odorless and their pernicious effects are never immediately evident. Sure scientists have been warning us for many, many decades that we need to stop burning fossil fuels or we will make life on earth hostile and brutish for all of us, even comfortable and economically secure Ann Arbor residents. We have generally ignored this advice in the same frame of mind that we ignore the advice of our physician or our spouse. Often it is only the heart attack that causes us to change our habits.

It is also widely unappreciated that the combustion of fossil gas, whether in our homes or in our work places, is a serious health hazard. It is a significant pulmonary threat particularly to children and elders.

Renewable energy, on the other hand, is none of this. It is clean, renewable and, once captured, essentially free. Its use is promoted by scientists, major industrial leaders and our military.

The City of Ann Arbor, having adopted the forward looking A2ZERO Plan, which has now been funded for 20 years by the voters, is now in the position of being a State and national leader by setting an aggressive but doable deadline for the end of methane gas as a fuel in our city.

This decision will be controversial and difficult. Setting a realistic yet prompt deadline will be a challenge. There will be myriad technical and economic decisions to be made. There are likely to have to be phase in steps and perhaps exceptions to be made. There will be uncertainties to be sure but the one thing that will be absolutely certain, we are at 416 ppm of CO₂ and going up every month and at some point in our lifetime we will reach global tipping points. When this happens your children will not thank you for referring this decision to another committee.

Please act thoughtfully but do act while we are still able to bend the Keeling curve downward.

Thank you for your consideration and your public service.

Richard

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