

ATHERTON ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE REACH CODE PUBLIC COMMENT

As presented by Committee Member Stacy Miles Holland

The Environmental Programs Committee enthusiastically supports the reach code presented by the building department and recommends eliminating the following exceptions:

RECOMMENDATION: Eliminate all exceptions for accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

- **Natural gas inside the home is unhealthy, especially in smaller buildings.** Last month, [Stanford researchers released a study](#) revealing that the emissions produced by gas stoves build up faster than previously understood and that smaller homes increase the risk of exposure. Burning gas emits pollutants that can [cause or worsen respiratory illnesses](#), including asthma and cardiovascular disease. Children living in homes using gas for cooking have a [42% higher risk of developing asthma](#).
- **All-Electric ADUs will reduce construction time.** Gas infrastructure is time-consuming and expensive to install. All-electric buildings are faster to design, permit and build. The Town anticipates a large increase of ADU construction; reducing construction time will limit the impact on neighbors.

RECOMMENDATION: Eliminate exceptions for cooking appliances and fireplaces.

- **Gas stoves are more dangerous than previously believed.** The same January 2022 Stanford study revealed that more than three quarters of emissions from stoves are emitted while the stove is off, regardless of the age or manufacturer of the appliance. The greenhouse gas emissions from America's gas stoves are the equivalent to [half a million gas cars on the road](#).
- **High quality electric fireplaces and induction stoves are readily available.** These are cutting edge appliances using proven technologies: water vapor fireplaces create extremely realistic mist "flames" and provide plenty of heat, and induction stoves and ovens outperform gas by all metrics per [Consumer Reports](#). They're also less expensive to purchase, install and operate.

Resource: [Redwood Energy: 2021 Pocket Guide to All-Electric Retrofits of Single-Family Homes](#)

Example water vapor fireplaces:



Example induction stoves:

