

RESOLUTION No. 2023–

RELATIVE TO OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED BAN ON NATURAL GAS HEATING AND APPLIANCES IN NEW YORK STATE

BY:

Council Member Kenny Tompkins

WHEREAS, Governor Kathy Hochul's recent State-of-the-State address contained a proposal to end the sale of new fossil powered heating equipment by 2030, calling for all new construction to be zero emission - starting in 2025 for small buildings and 2028 for large buildings; and

WHEREAS, President Joseph Biden and the White House have come out against any prohibition of gas stoves; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's proposal is intended to help address climate change, but could create a burden for our region's working-class residents; and

WHEREAS, a ban on natural gas appliances and water heaters is not feasible for Western New York with harsh winter weather and exposed electrical infrastructure. Appliances used to heat water and cook food need to work during power outages, especially during times of inclement weather; and

WHEREAS, this past December saw a blizzard rip through our area leaving tens of thousands of residents stuck in their homes without power, many for several days. Gas appliances, fed by more resilient infrastructure, allowed those residents to heat their homes, boil water, and safely cook their food for the days needed to clear the roads and restore electricity. Nearly four dozen people in Western New York people died during this storm and many more would have suffered if they had to rely on our power grid for cooking and emergency heating; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, alternatives to natural gas-powered heating have yet to be proven reliable as a sole-source heating system in cold-weather climates; and

WHEREAS, since electrical appliances have more moving parts and are expensive to maintain and repair, mandating their purchase would prove to be an unnecessary burden on families across New York State at a time when the cost of living has significantly outpaced wage growth; and

WHEREAS, currently, due to market conditions and technology limitations, most electric appliances are less efficient than gas and, absent improvements in electricity efficiencies and the electrical infrastructure grid, would likely cause increases in energy costs; and

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WHEREAS, as we have seen with California's recent push to make everything electric, improperly planned energy transitions can lead to an increased strain on a state's electrical grid, leading to blackouts and rationing, which is especially dangerous with the winter weather we experience; and

WHEREAS, the costs to transition New York State's energy infrastructure grid should go through a more thorough review to understand how this will impact the energy production and distribution system as a whole, how it will impact energy costs to consumers and how it will be paid for, before any action is taken.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Niagara Falls City Council hereby opposes New York State's plan to ban natural gas heating and appliances as currently drafted, as it does not adequately address concerns about our winter weather conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council urges Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature to pause on their rush and to fully examine the real life impact their decisions will have for all New Yorkers, especially those least able to afford them; and be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Hochul's Office, the Western New York Delegation to the New York State Senate and Assembly, and any other party deemed necessary and proper.