

Initiative 2066: Mandating Availability of Natural Gas

Initiative 2066, if approved by voters in November, would require cities and counties to allow piped gas service to consumers, require utilities to offer natural gas, and prohibit programs and policies that provide incentives to choose non-fossil heating and water heating options.

Summary by the Attorney General: This measure would repeal or prohibit certain laws and regulations that discourage natural gas use and/or promote electrification, and require certain utilities and local governments to provide natural gas to eligible customers.

Discussion by the Olympia Indivisible Initiatives Team

This initiative does several things to support continued use of fossil gas for residential heat and water heating. First, it mandates that Cities and Counties allow piped gas service throughout their jurisdictions. Second, it prohibits incentives to choose heat pumps for space and water heating by utilities and government agencies. Third, it prohibits the state building code council from adopting regulations that are unfavorable to builders who want to install gas appliances.

The initiative was funded by the residential building industry, through a front-group call “Main Street Cares About Washington.” The campaign is being managed by Let’s Go Washington, the committee formed to promote right-wing initiatives on this year’s ballot.

Currently, Cities, utilities, the state, and the federal government offer financial incentives and tax credits for installing clean, energy-efficient heat pumps. These appliances use electricity for heating, and are three-times as efficient as gas appliances. Our electricity supply is getting cleaner – no coal after 2025, GHG-neutral by 2030, and 100% clean by 2045.

Because appliances last a very long time, gas appliances installed today will likely be operating for decades, long after our electricity system is

clean. As a result, carbon emissions will continue longer than if electric heat pumps were selected.

In addition, gas ranges and cooktops emit pollutants directly into the home. These can cause serious respiratory disorders, which is why the Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility is such a strong opponent of I-2066.

Defeating I-2066 does not mean a “gas ban.” Utilities, cities, and counties can continue to allow gas service if they choose. Consumers can continue to choose gas or propane service if they want. But I-2066 would stop problems that are moving us toward a cleaner and healthier future.

How can YOU help:

1. Join the OI Initiatives Team as we walk precincts to educate local voters; contact jim@jimlazar.com to join our team.
2. Invite us to present at any group you belong to, from a book club to a Rotary or Lions Club
3. Volunteer directly with the NoOn2066 campaign at their website
4. Donate directly to the NoOn2066 campaign at their website
5. Volunteer to join the OI Postcard and Texting teams to work on these initiatives