



June 26, 2025 Climate, Resilience, and Land Use Committee Agenda

City Hall, Council Chambers, 2nd Floor – 1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204

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Thursday, June 26, 2025 9:30 am

Session Status: Adjourned

Committee in Attendance:

Councilor Sameer Kanal

Councilor Dan Ryan

Councilor Steve Novick, Co-Chair

Councilor Candace Avalos

Councilor Angelita Morillo, Co-Chair

Councilor Kanal left at 9:45 a.m.

Councilor Morillo presided.

Officers in attendance: Diego Barriga, Acting Council Clerk

Committee adjourned at 11:31 a.m.

Regular Agenda

1

[Appoint members to the Planning Commission](#)(Report)

Document number: 2025-262

Introduced by: Mayor Keith Wilson

City department: Planning and Sustainability (BPS)

Time requested: 40 minutes

Council action: Referred to City Council

Motion to refer the Report, Document Number 2025-262, to full Council with the recommendation that the appointments be confirmed: Moved by Novick and seconded by Kanal (Aye (5): Kanal, Ryan, Morillo, Avalos, Novick)

Committee discussion on electrification (Public Hearing)

Document number: 2025-263

Introduced by: Councilor Angelita Morillo

Time requested: 1 hour

Council action: Placed on File

Portland City Council, Climate, Resilience, and Land Use Committee
June 26, 2025 - 9:30 a.m.
Speaker List

Name	Title	Document Number
Angelita Morillo	Councilor, Committee Chair	
Diego Barriga	Acting Council Clerk	
Sameer Kanal	Councilor	
Dan Ryan	Councilor	
Steve Novick	Councilor, Committee Chair	
Candace Avalos	Councilor	
Christopher Herr	Council Policy Analyst	
Eric Engstrom	BPS Director	2025-262
Sandra Wood	BPS Principal Planner	2025-262
Eli Spevak	Planning Commission Appointee	2025-262
J'reyesha Brannon	Planning Commission Appointee	2025-262
Ruben Alvarado	Planning Commission Appointee	2025-262
Lukas Pollack	Planning Commission Appointee	2025-262
David Knowles	Planning Commission Appointee	2025-262
Carra Sahler	Director, Green Energy Institute at Lewis & Clark Law School	2025-263
Melanie Plaut MD	volunteer, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility	2025-263
Danny Noonan	Climate, Energy & Labor Strategist, Breach Collective	2025-263
Brian Stewart	Co-founder, Electrify Now	2025-263
Michaela McCormick	(Testimony)	2025-263
Diane Meisenhelter	(Testimony)	2025-263
Kathryn Williams	(Testimony)	2025-263
Howard Bell	(Testimony)	2025-263
W. Paul Elder	(Testimony)	2025-263
lynn handlin	(Testimony)	2025-263
Samantha Hernandez	(Testimony)	2025-263

Portland City Council, Climate, Resilience, and Land Use Committee
June 26, 2025 - 9:30 a.m.
Testimony List

Name	Document Number
Michaela McCormick	2025-263
Diane Meisenhelter	2025-263
Kathryn Williams	2025-263
Howard Bell	2025-263
W. Paul Elder	2025-263
lynn handlin	2025-263
Samantha Hernandez	2025-263

Portland City Council Committee Meeting Closed Caption File

June 26, 2025 – 9:30 a.m.

This file was produced through the closed captioning process for the televised city Council broadcast and should not be considered a verbatim transcript. The official vote counts, motions, and names of speakers are included in the official minutes.

Speaker: All right. Well, colleagues, good morning. I will call the climate resilience and land use committee to order. It is Thursday, June 26th at 9:32 a.m. Diego, will you please call the roll?

Speaker: Good morning. Canal.

Speaker: I'm here. I'm going to be leaving early. Just so everybody knows. But I am present,

Speaker: Brian novick here. Avalos.

Speaker: Present.

Speaker: Morillo here. Christopher, will you please read the statement of conduct?

Speaker: Welcome to the meeting of the climate resilience and land use committee to testify before this committee in person or virtually. You must sign up in advance in the committee agenda at. Agenda. Climate resilience and land use committee. Or by calling 311. Information on engaging with the committee can be found at this link. Registration for virtual testimony closes one hour prior to the meeting. In person, testifiers must sign up before the agenda item is heard. If public testimony will be taken on an item. Individuals may testify for three minutes unless the chair states otherwise. Your microphone will be muted when your time is over. The chair preserves order disruptive conduct such as shouting, refusing to conclude your testimony when your time is up, or interrupting others testimony or

committee deliberations will not be allowed. If you cause a disruption, a warning will be given. Further disruption will result in ejection from the meeting. Anyone who fails to leave once ejected is subject to arrest for trespass. Additionally, the committee may take a short recess and reconvene virtually. Your testimony should address the matter being considered. When testifying, state your name for the record. Your address is not necessary. If you are a lobbyist, identify the organization you represent. Virtual testifier should unmute themselves when the clerk calls your name. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you christopher. Today we have two items on our agenda. So first we're going to cover appointments from the planning commission. And then we'll have a presentation and committee discussion on electrification and councilor. Novick loves a bit and I promise that I would play an electrification related chorus for him. And so I will be doing that now.

Speaker: And didn't you wait till.

Speaker: We give electric? We need to know that I'm so bummed because I can't.

Speaker: Hear it. What was it?

Speaker: It was electric feel. But we're done now. I think that was all that was needed anyways. Yeah, sorry. We have to do things like that to keep ourselves joyful, so. Okay. Could you please read item one?

Speaker: Item one. Appoint members to the planning commission.

Speaker: This item is coming to us from the bureau of planning and sustainability. I'll hand it off to staff to talk to us about the planning commission and the slate of appointees before us today. We're going to hear from eric engstrom, the director, sandra wood, the principal planner, ruben, and then all of the appointees. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. It's hard to follow that. For the record, my name is eric engstrom. I'm the director of the bureau of planning and sustainability in the community and economic development service area. And as you mentioned with me is sandra wood, who's a principal planner who supports the work of the planning commission, among other duties. We're here to present the proposed appointees to the Portland planning commission, and we're seeking the committee's recommendation to move these forward to the full council for confirmation. Next slide please. This is the agenda this morning. I'm sorry. Could you go back one? We'll talk briefly about what the commission is some background on that. We'll talk about our process for recruitment. And then we'll introduce you to the appointees. Next slide. Next slide. So the Portland planning commission was originally established in 1918. So it's a venerable institution in Portland. Hundreds of people have served through the city through this commission for over a century. The purpose of the commission is to guide Portland's long range planning through the development, maintenance and updating of the city's comprehensive plan and zoning code. In making its recommendations, it considers the economic, environmental, social well-being of the city in an integrated fashion, and it deliberates using climate and equity lenses to and is committed to effective community involvement in its work. Next slide. The powers and duties of the commission are outlined in city code. This includes holding hearings and making recommendations to City Council, advising the City Council on plans and policies, and providing a forum for community members to learn about good land use planning practices. Next slide. The commissioners membership terms are outlined below and include nine members, including a youth commissioner, which is of the age of 18 to 25. The terms are four years and staggered, except the youth appointment, which is for a two year term. The commission membership has a

couple other parameters. It should embody a broad representation of Portland's diverse communities and geographies. It should have various professional expertise or lived experience, bringing a range of perspectives. It's not supposed to include more than two members engaged in the same occupation, trade or profession, and not more than two members who are for profit real estate developers. And with that, I'm going to pass it over to Sandra Wood to talk more about our recruitment process.

Speaker: Good morning. Councilors. For the record, Sandra Wood, BPS principal planner. So next slide please. The recruitment for the five planning commission positions opened in February and was open for a month. Outreach in March was very extensive, with direct contact to 16 professional organizations, six local chambers and nine community based organizations, as well as conducting social media outreach. Our staff and the planning commission chair also participated in two recruitment events at the Multnomah youth commission and the northwest youth careers expo, which was attended by 5000 youth. We received 85 applications, and in April, staff reviewed the applications and selected 21 people to interview. The two interview panels from various bureaus, council staff and a current planning commissioner conducted the interviews. In May, five candidates were selected for appointment by the mayor, who is seeking this committee's endorsement to the full council. Next slide. As part of all recruitments, the office of community and civic life includes a voluntary demographic survey for applicants to fill out. When we received the applications, all the identifiable information is not linked to the applicants materials. Of the 85 applicants who that we received, applications that we received, 75% completed the voluntary demographic survey. And the survey asked questions about 11 categories, including or 12 categories, including race and ethnicity and geographic representation. Next please. This slide

shows the race and ethnicity of the 64 applicants who responded to the survey, 67% of the respondents were white, 6% latinx, and 5% african American or black. These percentages are very similar to the racial and ethnic demographics of Portland as a whole. Next, and we received applications from every sextant of the city, including 9% of respondents from east of i-205. Next. So that's it for the background. Now I get to get into the exciting part. We're very excited to introduce the mayor's five recommendations for appointments to the Portland planning commission. I'll then invite them each to say a few words next. The first appointee is dr. Brannon. Drake spent nearly a decade working as a civil engineer for the city of Portland. She currently works in private sector in the private sector as a design engineer and project manager, supporting conveyance and wastewater projects in the northwest. She is passionate about environmental justice, civic engagement and diversifying the stem fields. Drake has served in a variety of leadership roles for nonprofits and community boards such as the national society of black engineers, Portland professionals, the state of Oregon's environmental justice council, and Multnomah County's charter review committee. We're excited to have drake as practical infrastructure, knowledge and passion for the environment on the commission. And before I go on, I'm going to go ahead and just invite the commission, the appointees up to sit on the dais, since they'll be speaking in a few minutes anyway. Thank you. David knowles is career has spanned four decades of public service and private sector consulting, mostly in the fields of urban planning and transit project development. David has had an active law practice, served as metro councilor and as a planning director for the city of Portland in the 90s. More recently, david had leadership positions at david evans and associates at couch hill, which is now jacobs and otak. Since retiring, he's dedicated time to important civic and nonprofit activities, including the Portland charter commission. David's

knowledge of planning issues in Portland and around the country will deepen the recommendations by the commission. Ruben alvarado is the executive director of the community cycling center, a Portland based nonprofit working to remove barriers to cycling and increase access to active transportation. Prior to relocating to Portland, ruben worked to advance education and housing equity in various roles across eastern Washington. Ruben served on the City Council as City Councilor in pasco, Washington, where he advocated for major infrastructure projects in historically underserved areas. He has served on various regional boards and pasco and college place, Washington, addressing transportation planning, health, and community action issues. Ruben's broad experience in creating a healthier and more equitable community will be a welcome addition to the commission, lucas pollock is the mayor's recommended appointee for the youth commissioner position. He's a southeast Portland resident of franklin high school graduate, and is currently obtaining a bachelor's degree in community urban studies and planning at Portland state university. He's planning to specialize in affordable and multi-dwelling housing. He has prior experience in canvassing for congressional and presidential election candidates, and volunteering with the Portland chapter of the japanese American citizens league. We're excited to have a youth voice back on the commission. And finally, the mayor's recommending the reappointment of commissioner eli spivak, who is a current planning commissioner. Eli has managed and financed the construction of over 250 affordable units through the community based nonprofit organizations. As a founder of orange splat llc, his mission is to pioneer new models of community oriented, affordable green housing development in Portland, where he has built almost 100 more units, a quarter of which are permanently affordable. As a consultant, he supports a initiative to expand housing options around the us. Eli

has been an influential leader on the commission, and would be thrilled to have him to continue in that capacity. He's not with us today, but we have a video on his behalf to share with you. Next, please. So today's five nominees will be joining four existing commissioners. Chair ralph, who is in the audience today, a nonprofit administrator and transportation community engagement advocate. Erica thompson, an architect with hennebery eddy architecture. And mary o'mara, who builds affordable housing with central city concern. And brian ames, who's a project manager with walsh construction. All in all, this composition ensures that the commission has broad representation of Portlanders in our communities in terms of expertise and demographics, including two representatives from district one. Next. So, in summary, the mayor's recommendation is that the City Council appoint five Portlanders to the planning commission, including one youth commissioner. The appointments are generally for four years, though the youth commissioner appointment is for two. Before I invite the appointees to say a few words, we'll go ahead and show the video from commissioner eli spivak.

Speaker: And I develop affordable.

Speaker: My name is eli spivak.

Speaker: And I develop affordable, community oriented housing through my company, orange spot llc. It's been an honor to serve on the planning commission, and I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for one more term. I'll be with you in person, but I'm out camping with my 12 year old son this week. My focus will continue to be on helping Portland create the amount and variety of housing we need in an equitable and climate friendly manner as possible. We've made significant headway on this over the past five plus years, but we clearly have further to go. I particularly look forward to a partnership between planning staff and commission and the City Council committee, not just as project arrived for votes,

but also as Portland decides which new planning projects to take on. It can easily take 1 to 2 years from initial staffing to when a project arrives at council for decision. And there's already a pretty stacked schedule for this year. I hope council will coordinate with staff and ideally commission leadership to shape the work plan and priorities for what's coming next. There will always be more project ideas than staff time or funding to do them. Let's make sure that the ones we take on are the ones you want to see coming to council. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to being in person next time.

Speaker: So that was commissioner spivak, and i'll now invite the appointees to say a couple words. Should we start with miss brennan?

Speaker: Hi.

Speaker: Thank you so much for your consideration. I have I'm a fourth generation Oregonian. I live, work and play and chose to spend a decade of my career working for the city of Portland. It's an honor to no longer. I mean, it's not an honor, but I do no longer work for the city of Portland, which allows me to now be involved in a process like this. I have always admired the commissions and committees, and that volunteer service that goes towards supporting the city of Portland. And so I am very excited to potentially be joining this commission and helping truly make Portland supported for all our communities so that they can live, work and play as well and have equitable access to infrastructure, land use planning and building a community where everybody is supported and has what they need to thrive.

Speaker: Good morning everyone. My name is ruben alvarado. I am honored to be here and really thankful to be considered to make Portland a better place. I've been very fortunate in my life to have served my communities. I believe that communities and cities are living beings who can be improved or deterred by the stewards of it. And I've been very fortunate to collaborate with so many people over

my life to try to make my communities better, and I hope to do so here as well. I'm so honored to be in Portland and so honored to be amongst just such friendly and amazing people. And I'm really looking forward to collaborating with this committee to really improve equitable access to equitable land use in Portland.

Speaker: Good morning, councilors. Thank you for your consideration. And as the youth commission youth commissioner appointee, I'm really looking forward to trying to include student and youth voices from the city in the process. I'm looking forward to learning quite a lot through participating in this. This has been something I've been interested in and the work that I've been wishing to do for a very long time, and it's been an honor already, and I look forward more so to making Portland a city that works better for everyone. I'm from here. I have a lot of love for this place, and I want to share that love and try to improve it for everyone. Thank you.

Speaker: I for the record, David Knowles, I just want to start by saying I'm really honored to be considered for this position. As you saw, there were 85 applications. As you can tell from my three colleagues here, they're all of high caliber. So getting to serve with them, I think is a privilege. And I really appreciate the mayor putting me forward and look forward. I hope to the council's confirmation just a little bit about me. I live in the Beaumont-Wilshire neighborhood. My wife, Pam and I have three sons. You may know one of them. They all graduated from Grant High School and we have been dedicated to this community for many years. My wife served on the Portland School Board. As many of you know, I'm really excited about this opportunity because for me, it's kind of a full personally, it's a full circle moment. I started my land use and transportation experience by being an elected member of the Metro Council, and then became planning director and later went into working for the private sector, including Dresser firm, Jacobs Engineering, at the conclusion of

my career. So I'm looking forward to bringing that knowledge to help the commission look forward, as it has for over 100 years. Providing recommendations on the vision for our city. I just think it's critically important, so I'm excited about it and thank you for the opportunity.

Speaker: Thank you all so much for being here today. Really appreciate you taking time to meet with us in person. And folks who weren't able to make it. Do we have any public testimony signed up for this item?

Speaker: No one has signed up.

Speaker: All right, then I think we can move on to committee discussion. And I see some folks have their hands raised already. So first councilor novick and then councilor canal.

Speaker: Hi, I have kind of an open ended question for any of you that think it'd be interesting to answer. I was wondering if any of you could identify one of the more interesting issues the planning commission has dealt with in the past five years or so, and your perspective on how the commission and how the council dealt with that issue.

Speaker: Well, I'm going to share one of the probably biggest projects of my career here, career here in the city, which is the residential infill project. That was a project where we were actually at commission for about nine months. The, the there were several concerns we were addressing at the time. One of them was the concern about demolitions that were occurring in neighborhoods, and the 1 to 1 replacements of one house to another house. There was also, of course, the affordability issues that we were already seeing in the city and exclusionary zoning of single dwelling zones where only one expensive house was allowed on one lot. When we brought it to the planning commission, I believe they had a hearing and had probably over 100 testifiers. The commission heard the testimony very well

and really felt that staff hadn't gone far enough with our proposal. They deliberated extensively, asked for more studies, we and then they landed on a different a different solution, a broader solution, which was to allow middle housing in all neighborhoods in Portland that I'm sure many of you are aware of now, because we've seen many of them built. So that was a nine month long process. We needed to rewrite all of the rules and bring it back to them, and they were much more satisfied. And when we brought it to City Council, we started with a work session bringing the council, the planning commission chair, schultz, who represented the commission, and some of the discussion was about displacement and whether this was going to incentivize more demolitions and more displacement in the city. Through our studies of and anti-displacement actions, we were able to show that this would be a positive effect for Portland and Portlanders, and having more people live in well-served neighborhoods. And I think we're seeing the results of that now. Last year, we published the year two after implementation that shows that we're seeing good results with that. So that's an example, I think, of the planning commission really digging deep and doing some some deep work and improving not only the recommendation coming to council, but the rationale for why the city should move in that direction.

Speaker: Thank you, councilor kanal and then councilor Ryan.

Speaker: Thanks. So first to the.

Speaker: Appointee appointees. Thanks for being willing to serve, and I intend to support you here as well as at the full council. If you see me, remove it from the consent agenda. It's not about you. It's a process thing. Just to get that out of the way, I have a couple questions on the process. I only had one specific question for an appointee, and it was actually for eli. So you might actually know, is he the same eli who was involved in cully grove and cully green? Yes. Okay. That's that's good to

know. I think that's a helpful and definitely supporting for me. But so I have three questions that were process wise. You mentioned east of 205 as a geographical range. Is that the category set by the office of civic life, as opposed to the d1 district boundary?

Speaker: That's correct. Let me look at that really quick. The categories that are set are actually much more precise. They're not by district. And I believe there is an east of 205 category. Sorry I'm looking at right now. But there's northeast southeast southwest.

Speaker: Yeah thanks. Were council staff you said involved in the interview process? Is that actual councilor office staff or was that council operations.

Speaker: Councilor office staff? I believe it was commissioner councilor morillo office. Yeah.

Speaker: Great. And then my third question is there's nine members on this commission. Four is a lot to have turnover at once. Can you can you speak to that a little bit.

Speaker: Sure. We had the planning and sustainability commission was operating since about 2009 and had been operating, and a few years ago there were community conversations and the idea to dissolve the planning and sustainability commission and create the sustainable sustainability and climate commission that scc, I believe you've seen their appointments already. And to reconstitute the planning commission. So we did that in 2000, in 2023. So that was only two years ago when. So we had a brand new slate of commissioners. And at that time we decided that five of them should have a four year appointment, and four of them should have a two year appointment. So for a while, I think we're going to see this like the five and the two, the half and half. It's been my experience that that will kind of dissipate after a while because, you know, people quit or resign for a variety

of reasons. So we'll have to do a special recruitment. But that's how we set it up originally.

Speaker: Sure. So I guess what I'm saying is, if there's anything structural that council can do to support so that when five positions are up at a time, more than one person is seeking renewal of their term, that would be something I would like to be supportive of, because that that is a low ratio. I think that's fair to say that one out of five positions being being reappointed and four being new people.

Speaker: Oh, I see, I see, I see what you mean. Right now we only have eight positions. So eight positions filled. Is that right? No, I guess we do have nine positions filled. So yeah, five one is being reappointed for our staying and then we have four new.

Speaker: Yeah. So again, just if there's anything that that council can do to be supportive of creating whatever culture of retention retention you need, let.

Speaker: Us know. Yeah. Yeah. And we'd be happy to talk to you about the folks that are stepping down. A couple of them are moving out of Portland. One is moving into Washington, one is moving down to salem.

Speaker: Well nobody's perfect.

Speaker: Yeah, thanks.

Speaker: Councilor Ryan.

Speaker: Yes. Thank you. Chair. First of all, thank you so much, sandra. This was a great report. And thank you, all of you, for being here in person. It really does make a big difference. It adds immense value to this process. And I want to first say this, the planning commission in the last two years I experienced some split votes. I think it was the glazing issue that caused that.

Speaker: And yes.

Speaker: And I want to lift that to say it was when I first got on the council, it seemed like everything was unanimous. And then it started to switch and it became more split votes. And I thought that was healthy. And so when you brought that type of tension to the council, it was helpful because we were experiencing it as well. And I think that also suggests that there's been an effort to get more nuance and balance in the commission. So I want to acknowledge your work as well, Sandra, in that recruitment, I do have one question. I just like to ask something to see how you think. I don't even know if it's fair, but I'm not going to hold you to any of it. But we've been we passed a lot of TIF districts, and so TIF districts are on the front of everyone's minds. And I think that there's historical points of view on that. And then there's current trying to get your brain wired into what the current values are around that and how we work with that. If you have any thoughts on the value of TIF districts, I think the Cully one sticks out as a different type of process than we did in the past. So I just wanted to hear popcorn. If anyone wants to weigh in on your thoughts about how to work with the new and improved TIF districts, if you will, and I know that's in partnership with Prosper as well, right?

Speaker: Correct.

Speaker: And housing.

Speaker: Yeah. Prosper and housing.

Speaker: But does it pop up those the TIF district issues and development. Does it come to the planning commission.

Speaker: Yes it does.

Speaker: They're not a recommending body, but they do make a decision a recommendation. Yeah.

Speaker: You often are the final stop before it comes to council. Right.

Speaker: And of course the council also receives a recommendation from the Portland Prosper Portland board or pdc.

Speaker: If anyone has an opinion on the value of tif districts going today and going forward. And if you say that's not really fair because I haven't had a chance to be in the new role, you could say that as well.

Speaker: Well, I don't think any of us has yet tackled that question. And it's a different question from the one that I tackled many years ago. I guess I would say that maximizing the value of those designations and of the tax revenue is something that has to be linked with the development policies for those areas. I mean, in the zoning code and in the comp plan. So that's an important linkage that ought to be examined whenever you're talking about creating or amending those tif districts. It's a way to maximize their the opportunity that they represent.

Speaker: Thank you David.

Speaker: And that is the role of the planning commission in terms of the tif districts. Is it does it advance our goals because the comprehensive plan isn't a plan for bts as a bureau bureau planning sustainability, it is the city's plan for growth, where we want growth to occur and what you know, and where we're investing infrastructure, it's an infrastructure plan and all of that. So the planning commission's role is to make sure that the tif district as a tool is being utilized to advance the goal of smart growth and where we want growth and investment and investments.

Speaker: Well said. Well, I just hope that overlay that crosswalk is active, right?

Speaker: Right.

Speaker: Yeah. Anyone else want to say hi?

Speaker: Hi, Tricia. I think also there's a lot of I've been following some of the community engagement process on the tif districts, and there's a lot of people and

a lot of organizations who are helping steward those conversations. And there's still a lot of community members. I live in east Portland, hazelwood area, so I'm seeing some of the nonprofits are holding those conversations. And there's a lot of people who don't know what that means, what it is, or how it will impact them. So I think while we can talk about what the goals are for the bureau and the cities and the growth, it's also who is it growing for and who is benefiting from that growth. So that's something that I will always hold dearly. As someone who's been displaced from north Portland into east Portland, that's something that I'm going to be using as a lens for that conversation.

Speaker: That's great. And one other thing, just to see if anyone wants to say anything about it. It's just fun to see how you all think. And the other big issue facing our city is obviously we have a building supply issue when it comes to housing, and that sometimes that rubs up against environmental concerns. And so we have to figure out how to build because we're, you know, there's cities in the country right now that have rents going down because they've been doing supply for the last 20, 30 years, but we haven't. So ours are not going down. We have to acknowledge that we've failed in terms of building when it comes to housing. So how can we make sure those two that sometimes are pitted against each other can move forward? So I just hope that you, you know, that that's where one of the tension points is. Right? Okay. It's more like coming into this with your eyes wide open.

Speaker: So, councilor Ryan, I just say one of the values of the planning commission is to be able to address really complicated issues like that in a way that we can bring forward to the council a recommendation, because there are so many tradeoffs inherent in those policies that it takes sort of some fine workmanship to

figure out the solutions so that you don't have to address those in that kind of detail.

Speaker: I think that's what I liked about the split vote around the bird glazing was you could tell that you all went really hard on that, and it was one of the better discussions between the planning commission and the council, because you really dove in. And I remember all of us felt like we learned a lot during that process. And I don't think any of us can undo that. So I hope you can keep building upon what I think was healthy tension. Yeah.

Speaker: It's interesting you bring that up because some of the outgoing commissioners were also reflecting upon that at their last meeting on Tuesday. About is a unanimous vote a good thing or is a split vote a good thing? And I think they both can be one of the one of the things that this commission does, I think really well is that when people are voting no on something, they're articulating why. And we include that in their transmittal letter to council. So the council, the, the letter coming from the planning commission will always say what the date was, what the vote was, who they heard from, how much testimony, and if there were no votes, why? And as a matter of fact, the project that I was discussing before the residential infill project, we came to council with a 54 vote. The four all had different versions of why they were voting no. They had different concerns and that was articulated in the letter. They also all said, I just want to make a point. I vote, I want this to pass, but I want to make a point and communicate that dissenting opinion, if you will, to the council.

Speaker: And when you started bringing that kind of information to the council, it was much better government than when it would just come with a unanimous with no words. And it made you think, what? What is this exactly?

Speaker: And it can help you. I think as as councilors prepare for the testimony and like david was saying, all all of the decisions at this point are hard decisions and there's many trade offs.

Speaker: And the reason I did this through line of questioning was someone mentioned, we have to have that alignment with the bureau, with the planning commission, and then with the council. And how can we be aligned and at least what the topic is, what the three top topics are?

Speaker: Yes.

Speaker: It's a really important time for us to focus. Yeah. Thank you all for your service.

Speaker: If I may, what I believe about these processes is the hardest. Decisions are not good versus bad. They're great value versus another great value where these values are at odds. And you you're having to really weigh the nuance. And in my experiences have been the times that I've been most sleepless but also most rewarding. And so I'm really thankful to be to continue that here and but also just to be able to enjoy or to be able to benefit from decisions that I've made. I just moved into a house in foster powell that used to be a large lot, and now it's instead of one family living there, now three families can, can, can be there, afford to live there. And that's because of decisions being made here. But also, you know, those those were not easy decisions when I was in. Yeah. So when I was in pasco i, we looked to Portland for, for how do we fix this housing crisis. And so I'm really thankful to.

Speaker: I appreciate that so much. I just wanted to end with one issue that i, when I brought everyone together as a cat herder for permit reform, the issue that didn't get discussed enough was the code clutter. And I hope that your commission really looks at that. It's an issue at the city of Portland. We pass codes. We pass codes, but we don't look at what ones we should probably get rid of that don't have

value anymore because of the new ones we passed. And it drives every customer crazy, as you know. And so please work with the permitting office to continue to look at code clutter. Thanks.

Speaker: Thank you all so much for being here. Thank you, councilors, for your questions. I really appreciated hearing from all of you and learning more about why you're passionate about this work. And I have one small piece of gentle feedback for how we recruit for the committee. And I would just say that the data that we were given shows that the applications that the outreach that we did was reflective of the demographics of our city. But the reason that Portland is so white predominantly is because of issues with equity. And so I want to make sure that in these commissions, when we are recruiting, that we're actually overcompensating and making sure that we have an active recruitment for people of color and specifically black Portlanders as well, to make sure that we are getting all of the perspectives that we need. It's not enough to just maintain what is currently reflective of our city, because hopefully that will change too. And with that, we have just two minutes to get through this agenda item. So I would like to entertain a motion to send the appointments of ruben alvarado, david knowles, girish brannan, eli spivak and lucas pollock to the planning commission, to the full council with a recommendation that the appointments be confirmed. Do I have a second or.

Speaker: So moved?

Speaker: Second.

Speaker: All right. Councilor novick moves to recommend the appointments to the planning commission, to the full council with a recommendation and councilor kanal seconded. Is there any further discussion? All right. Will the clerk please call the roll?

Speaker: Canal.

Speaker: Thank you all for stepping up and for eli for stepping back up. And I want to cosign everything that councilor morillo just said as well, I vote i.

Speaker: Ryan. I novick.

Speaker: Thank you so much. Look forward to working with you.

Speaker: I avalos. I morillo.

Speaker: Thank you so much for serving our city. I vote aye.

Speaker: With five eyes. The motion carries.

Speaker: Wonderful. Thank you all so much for being here today. I really appreciate you.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: Diego, will you please read the next item.

Speaker: Item two committee discussion on electrification.

Speaker: Yes.

Speaker: As we tend to do in this committee, we love inviting experts from all sorts of areas to come and speak to our committee about issues that are important to us. It feels like a lifetime ago that we were talking about renewable fuels and electrification. And then the budget happened and we forgot all of those discussions. So I am inviting our speakers up to come do a presentation. We have cara saylor, melanie plaut, danny noonan and brian stewart. If you're in the room and would like to step forward, and I believe the advocates will be sharing their own slides, if there is any tech support that's needed for that.

Speaker: Okay. Yeah.

Speaker: All right. Just set that up. Is that working? Looks like it.

Speaker: Welcome. Thank you all so much for being here. For folks who are in the room to testify on this item, I just wanted to note that we will only have two

minutes of testimony just due to our limited time slots, and that will happen after the presentation. And then we'll do some council discussion as well. But you may begin.

Speaker: Well good morning folks. This is an impressive group of people to appear before. So I confess I'm a little bit nervous. But thank you for having us here. My name.

Speaker: Is kara saylor,

Speaker: And I'm the director and one of four staff attorneys at the green energy institute. So we are a grant funded organization that is housed within lewis and clark law school's environmental, natural resources and energy law program. We focus on developing and implementing smart and comprehensive strategies to support a swift and equitable transition to a carbon free energy grid. So I sometimes say we're a think tank and sometimes we're a do tank. I'll just do this.

Speaker: One, okay?

Speaker: Okay, so here's where we are. And what guides our engagement in the very wonky processes at the public utility commission. You can see some of the recommendations here from offered by the ipcc, the intergovernmental panel on climate change, encouraging widespread electrification of end uses and elimination of greenhouse gas emissions from our electricity systems. You can also see a chart here, which reflects the declining emissions of pge and pacific power, the two electric investor owned utilities that serve the city of Portland, and the rising emissions of northwest natural gas utility that serves Portland. We do not have reflected here the most recent numbers. Deq is always just a little bit behind as it audits the emissions reports, but pge is pretty proud as it should be of the substantial emissions reductions it's attained in just a year. So it has that as a press release. And in its most recent sustainability report. So this is where we're headed

this morning in the very short time I have with you, I'm going to just talk about the public utility commission, what it is and what it does. Forgive me for those of you who already know this, but sometimes it's helpful just to sort of a level set the law that is applicable to northwest natural. That's going to guide its carbon emission reductions in the future. How northwest natural plans to comply with that law, and some of the problems the public utility commission and stakeholders have identified with the company's plans. This is where we do our work, the Oregon public utility commission, and these are the people we try to convince. The puc's mission is to ensure Oregonians have access to safe, reliable and fairly priced utility services that advance state policy and promote the public interest. The puc takes its direction from the legislature and the other agencies in the state, and it makes an economic decision about what is best for Oregon ratepayers. That used to be an easier job. It's become harder as the commissioners are now tasked with sort of supervising how our utilities reduce their carbon emissions. The puc also responds to public comment, and I mentioned that because I noticed the former mayor, ted Wheeler, submitted comments objecting to pj's last rate case, the rise in rates. I didn't see one coming in northwest natural's rate case, also filed last year. And then again this year. And I just note that it's helpful for the commission to hear from members of the community, and especially its leaders, as it's attempting to make decisions about what is best for Oregonians. I'm going to quickly walk you through the main law that requires northwest natural to decarbonize. I just encourage you to ask questions, if you have any. Maybe along the way, although I know that there's probably time at the end for questions, I just don't want you to leave anything unanswered here. But essentially what we've got here is an Oregon department of environmental quality rule. The rules are intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from significant sources in Oregon. They are also

intended to prioritize equity by promoting benefits to environmental justice. Communities disproportionately burdened by the effects of climate change and air pollution. So these rules came about as a result of a series of events. You probably remember, beginning with the republican walkouts on proposed cap and trade legislation in Oregon in early 2020, and in response, governor kate brown issued executive order 20 zero four, directing various agencies to implement climate related initiatives, and one of those directives was to deq to adopt this program to cap and reduce emissions. So it's somewhat like a cap and invest or a cap and trade. You may have heard about california, Washington, other parts of the country have something like this. The deq does not have statutory authority to allow or facilitate a trading of allowances. So instead this is just a reduce requirement. Okay. So how do our natural gas utilities plan to comply with the law. Luckily we have a very robust public process that all of our investor owned utilities, including avista, cascade and northwest natural are required to comply with the utility has this. Law, the climate protection program, the cpp. It's a technology neutral law. Fossil fuel suppliers. You have to figure out how to reduce your emissions. You just have to do it or risk facing penalties. And you can see some of the provisions on the slide there which sort of walk you through. There's a cap. The cap lowers over time. It's a very clear obligation. And the fuel suppliers have to reduce their emissions. The gas utilities produce something called an integrated resource plan, or irp, and the irp presents a utility's current plan to meet its future energy needs through what's called a least cost, least risk framework that looks at energy generation and demand reduction. Both the electric utilities have to do this as well as the gas utilities. I should say this is just for investor owned utilities. That's all we have serving us here in the city of Portland. The plan includes estimates of future energy needs, an analysis of the resources available to meet those needs, and how to

secure those resources. So it's a comprehensive and strategic document that drives utility investments, programs and activity. So northwest natural is in the midst of its planning process right now. Stakeholders in fact, just last night received an updated draft of its irp, which I've attempted to absorb between last night and this morning, to be able to give you the most up to date information, but I'll keep my presentation pretty high level to give you just a general sense of what the company is planning. So actually, if you could go back one slide. Thank you. This chart looks a little different between the first draft and the second draft, but the message is the same. Northwest natural has to figure out how to decrease its emissions in consistent with that large green segment you see. So that bottom line is the dropping cap. And the upper green line is where they would expect their emissions to be. Now there's a lot of forecasting here. Right? So I mean, the sort of the joke is an irp isn't is isn't useful the day after it's filed. But but the hope is that it does give us a sense of what we might expect in the future so that we can plan carefully. And you can go ahead to the next slide. So this is a chart again from the previous irp. It looks pretty similar in the draft I got last night. You can see that northwest natural does have that tiny segment in Washington. So it has to comply with a climate commitment act. And then you see the Oregon cap there the climate protection program. These are the compliance resources. Northwest natural is considering reduced usage through conservation and energy efficiency. I think everyone is a thumbs up on that. That's a no regrets action. Compliance instruments. And so here the deq allow gives allowances or a permit to pollute if you will for consistent with the declining cap over time community climate investments. So this is a unique piece that's in the Oregon climate protection program. I, I happen to think it's pretty ingenious. It is effectively an offset, but not in the way we think of offsets as being bad. Rather, it's a dollar amount that the gas

utility pays that then is used in projects that simultaneously deliver emissions reductions. So think heat pumps a sort of a no brainer there. When we think about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, biomass derived fuels. So they call that renewable natural gas, synthetic methane, which we'll talk just a little bit about hydrogen and carbon capture okay. So what's the problem with this. It looks great right. We know cows produce methane. Let's capture it and heat our homes with it. So a couple of problems. Rng or biomethane is still methane. Pipelines leak, facilities leak releasing uncombusted methane a greenhouse gas more harmful, 82 times more harmful than carbon dioxide. Here's a picture of the methane emissions from three mile canyon project in boardman that the company uses to meet its obligations to customers who've signed up for the smart energy program. So you can see the blue is the emitting methane that's leaking from the facility.

Speaker: Yeah.

Speaker: I just want to pause for a second, because we started at 1010 and we have about 30 minutes for your presentation, so we might have to move a little bit quicker. Sorry about that.

Speaker: You got it. No problem. I think I'm just about done actually. So. And then you can see the costs, which you know is quite problematic when you think about today's natural gas prices, \$3 per mmbtu. Let's see. Right now the gas utility has six offtake projects and two offtake projects, meaning they're just buying the credits associated with the renewable natural gas, not the actual gas. And then the and two development projects in lexington, nebraska, the company's reliance on biomethane is useful to the company because it allows it to use ratepayer dollars to continue to use fossil fuel infrastructure. Let's see. I'll just mention availability of biogas. You can see the company has a goal of meeting its renewable natural gas by 5% of its distribution, current supply to customers. And as of 2023, it had

produced 0.91%. And then last let's see, hydrogen, a plan to deliver hydrogen blended into the system. I'll just make a couple of points here. There's a questionable climate benefit when it's blended into the distribution system. There's concerns about leaks and pipe embrittlement because of hydrogen as well as appliances on the home side. How whether they can manage a blend of hydrogen or not. Moving on to synthetic methane. This is an interesting method that the company is contemplating, which would allow it to produce hydrogen and then add waste carbon dioxide to effectively create methane again. So it could be run through pipes, but, you know, it seems that hydrogen is going to be such a necessary and highly sought after fuel that we probably don't want to run it through our pipes mixed with waste carbon dioxide. Last slide. The integrated resource plan right now is anticipating a drop in its forecasted customers. So but it was anticipating adding 200,000 new customers over 20 years just in its last irp. And the one that I've just received last night, they have halved that forecast. Primarily, they say, due to population reductions in the city of Portland and in its territory in Oregon. In the near term, they plan to buy these renewable thermal certificates, which are the piece that is produced when rng, the renewable natural gas, the biomethane is delivered. They get the certificate. So they don't actually again have the biomethane. They just have the certificate. So they have facilities in new york and utah, wisconsin and then long term hydrogen and synthetic methane. Commission response in 2023, concerned about the cost and risk of the alternative fuels that they're planning to rely on for compliance with the climate protection program, concerned about sort of weighing the plan more heavily in favor of renewable natural gas, as opposed to these community climate investments that would allow for reductions of greenhouse gas emissions through the technologies

that people can install, and then a refusal to look at electrification. And i'll pass it off to my colleagues. Thank you.

Speaker: For the record, my name is melanie plaut. I'm an ob gyn doc. I practice here in the Portland area for 36 years, and I now volunteer with Oregon physicians for social responsibility. Opsr is an organization of health professionals that works collaboratively to seek a healthy, just, and peaceful world. So I want to talk about some of the health risks of using methane. Methane impacts our health in a number of different ways. I'm going to talk about indoor air pollution, outdoor pollution, explosions, carbon monoxide and fracking, which are three risks that occur from methane that we don't have with electrification. And then, of course, climate. So gas stoves are the only gas appliance that's vented indoors. And we spend 90% of our time indoors. So even though this is a small amount of methane that's burned, it affects us more acutely. Next, when you cook you always create particulate matter. When you cook with electricity, you create really only pm 2.5. And this is why you should always use effective ventilation every time you cook. With luck, you have something that ventilates to the outside, but with gas cooking you get some bonuses that you don't get with electric or induction stoves, you get more particulate matter, you get nitrogen dioxide, sometimes referred to as nox, which is a more umbrella term. And nox doesn't come from methane directly, but it is formed from the oxygen and nitrogen in the air whenever you burn a fuel at high temperatures. This is called the zel'dovich reaction. So like with car exhaust or industrial processes. In addition, when you have gas piped into your home, you get known carcinogens like formaldehyde and benzene, which are released not only with the burning of methane, but are also emitted in small amounts in the unburned gas, which always leaks. Next slide the effect of nox on health has been known since the 70s, especially since it's a major component of air pollution from

gas powered vehicles. I was a little concerned that maybe this knowledge might have been wiped from the federal websites, but it is still there. Respiratory symptoms have been linked to gas for years. Some of these studies have been criticized by the gas industry, especially with relationship to gas stoves. But remember that it would be unethical, given what we do know about nox to intentionally expose children's or adults to this substance. Next slide. You may know that asthma is the number one chronic disease in children. A review of the literature that looked methodically at 41 studies found an increased risk in asthma symptoms and an increased lifetime risk of asthma. Next slide. We know a lot about nox and how bad it is for us. It's bad for the heart and lungs. It increases cancer. It's not so great for pregnancy. It also affects our brains. And it has been associated with increased alzheimer's, teenage depression and bad calls by umpires. Next slide. Lower income and people of color are at higher risk from gas stoves, since they're more likely to live in larger families, smaller homes without adequate ventilation and appliance maintenance. They're also more likely to live in places that have more outdoor pollution from adjacent highways and industrial facilities. And many of these populations already have an increased risk of health conditions like asthma. The gas industry will often emphasize the importance of ventilation, and this is true, but the fact is that fans are quite noisy, so it's no surprise a california survey showed that over half of people don't use them routinely. And I have to say, before I really looked into this, I would only turn on my fan when I was cooking stinky fish or something like that, but you should really always use it. And many fans like the kind with a microwave above the stove, really don't do anything. They're just recirculating the air in your kitchen. There was an interesting study in baltimore which addressed this. They supplied randomized people who had gas stoves, either to ventilation or to filters, or to replacing their gas stoves with electric

stoves. And the only thing that significantly reduced nox was replacing the gas stove with an electric stove. Next slide. So now let's turn to outdoor pollution. So the big use of gas in homes is gas furnaces and water heaters. You may have heard that recently carb in california announced a requirement that air and water heating sold as of 2030 will need to be zero nox. And essentially that's a ban on new gas appliances. They estimate that with this move, there will be hundreds of fewer deaths in the state every year, and big savings in health costs. Now, to the three bonus risks that you get with methane gas. So this picture is from 23rd avenue. In 2016, there was a natural gas explosion there that injured eight people and caused over \$17 million in property damage. You don't get this with electricity. The only reason that we have carbon monoxide detectors in our home is because we may be using gas there, and in 2015, 393 people died from carbon monoxide. Often these are low income folks who don't have a properly maintained appliance and may not have a working carbon monoxide detector. Recent research also suggests that even low levels may have adverse chronic effects. Next, there is fracking. Now, we don't have fracking here in Oregon, but most of our gas does come from fracking. And people who live close to fracking sites, say in pennsylvania or other parts of the country, have an increased risk of poor health outcomes like premature birth and childhood leukemia. And finally, there's the climate, which, of course, is the big one. Methane is a very strong greenhouse gas. But the good news is that it has a shorter half life than carbon dioxide. So anything we can do to reduce it in the atmosphere can more quickly help with global warming. Next slide. You all remember the heat dome. Obviously being too hot is not good for our health and neither is air pollution. We see this especially now with the wildfire increases and climate change. And you might have seen the new york times article yesterday that talked about how having both too hot a place and the air pollution at the same time is a double

health whammy. Next slide. So in summary, there is no controversy. Nox, which you get from burning fuels, is bad for our health both indoors and out. Substituting hydrogen or biogas instead of fossil. Quote natural gas doesn't change that. The explosions, carbon monoxide poisoning and fracking that you get from using methane don't exist. With electrification and methane, both the burning of it and as kara mentioned, the leaks from unburned gas all along the supply chain are a strong component of climate change. So a rapid decline in methane use would have both climate and health benefits. And i'll turn it over to danny.

Speaker: Yeah. Thank you. And I am cognizant of the time, so i'll try and move quickly. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. For the record, my name is danny noonan, and I'm a climate, energy and labor strategist with breach collective. I'm also a registered lobbyist with the city of Portland. Breach collective is a nonprofit organization founded in 2020, whose mission is to build power with the climate and labor movements through organizing, legal, advocacy, education, and storytelling. My early professional background is in litigation, including relevantly securities and climate change litigation. But I do not practice law currently, rather, the expertise that I have developed over the past five years of my career has been in the area of building electrification policy, as well as corporate accountability around disinformation and greenwashing in the building sector. And my presentation today is going to be at the intersection of these two issues. As I set out in a letter sent to this committee on February 24th, there is a clear, straightforward and well-supported case for electrifying buildings as a climate solution. This case centers around the energy efficiency and co-benefits of heat pump appliances. These advantages exist right now and will increase as the share of renewables on the grid increases, and there are legal pathways to electrification. And I know bts has talked about that previously, and we'd be happy to talk about that more in

detail during the q&a. My co-panelist presentations have shown that northwest natural is not persuaded regulators that there are effective, available or affordable gas system alternatives to electrification, and that northwest natural continues to evade concerns around the air quality impacts that are particular to gas use. The central argument in my presentation is that gas utilities like northwest natural are not actually attempting to make an affirmative case. That gas system decarbonization is a credible or competitive alternative to building electrification. Instead, gas utilities are deploying a public relations strategy to impede regulation. To understand this argument, you need to put yourselves in the shoes of an investor owned corporation whose primary objective is to maximize near-term shareholder value. Accordingly, if you are an investor owned gas utility, if you are repeatedly missing the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets that you have set for yourself, if you are failing to decarbonize, even though you effectively authored the state law that was supposed to enable you to do so, if evidence is mounting that the health risks of gas appliance use are qualitatively and quantitatively worse than electric appliance use, and there is further documented evidence that your industry has known about these risks for decades. And if, because you are a gas only utility, each home or business that switches off of gas represents a lost customer, then your profit motive will drive you towards a well documented industry playbook that centers around a communications and public relations strategy designed to oppose regulation. There is a robust academic and popular literature on this corporate playbook, which has previously been used by the tobacco industry, fossil fuel producers and other polluting industries. To briefly summarize this literature. The strategies in this playbook are not intended to win a policy debate outright. Instead, the goal is to create doubt and confusion in the minds of decision makers and the general public, because time and again, a tie in

the minds of decision makers has preserved the status quo. Understanding that gas utilities like northwest natural are deploying, this playbook helps us understand the contradictions that exist in how northwest natural has engaged in building decarbonization policy in recent years. For instance, it explains why northwest natural began promoting so-called renewable natural gas with an advertising campaign focusing on the image of free range, free range cattle, whereas in reality, the company's first two investments went towards propping up two of the worst polluting industrial slaughterhouses in the country. It explains why while northwest natural widely promoted a 0.2% turquoise hydrogen blend in southeast Portland as a carbon capture project, life cycle emissions analyzes have indicated that the hydrogen produced by this process is likely just as emissions intensive as using natural gas directly. It explains why northwest natural responded to the Multnomah County health department health department's report on public health impacts of gas use by employing a scientist from a consulting firm notorious for representing polluting industries, seeking to undermine the scientific basis for regulation. It also explains why northwest naturalists created an affiliated with a network of front groups to advocate against electrification, including grassroots sounding entities whose websites they own and of whom they are essentially the sole funder. While simultaneously denying that they control these groups to the media and the public. And finally explains why, when all these other tactics fail, northwest natural turns to litigation to slow and roll back regulations. There is also evidence, thanks to researchers at the organization influencemap, that the gas industry is coordinating this strategy at a global level, with different narratives being deployed in different jurisdictions based on their perceived environmental consciousness. And this helps us to understand why northwest natural's communication strategy in the pacific northwest has focused around these renewable alternatives, while in states like

louisiana, the approach has been to redefine fossil gas as clean energy. There is also evidence at a national and corporate level that northwest natural remains committed to fossil fuels. And I just want to briefly point you to these two examples. The first is that the northwest natural has close ties to and holds an ongoing leadership position within the American gas association. The American gas association has not been talking about a nationwide transition to renewables. Rather, they have cheer led president trump's energy agenda and touted the vast fossil gas reserves that exist within the united states. The second example is that northwest natural, the holding company, has recently acquired two texas gas utilities. They have promoted these utility acquisitions to shareholders on the basis that these texas utilities are building new gas networks in urban sprawl areas, and there is no indication that they plan to decarbonize these texas gas holdings. These holdings further represent perhaps as much as a 30% increase in northwest natural's customer base relative to the pacific northwest. And taken together, this would suggest that northwest natural is not moving away from fossil fuels, but is instead doubling down on a fossil fuel business model. To summarize, the evidence indicates that northwest natural is not seriously committed to decarbonization, and I think their engagement on future building electrification policy before this council needs to be understood in this context. Thank you.

Speaker: I think we're doing okay on time. Would you like to go next?

Speaker: My name is brian stewart. I'm a co-founder of electrify. Now we're a education based volunteer organization helping people understand the benefits of electrification. I'm really here just mostly for questions, so I'm happy to answer any questions about electrification, feasibility of it, cost of it. There's multiple studies that have been done in the pacific northwest and this area, the west coast and in the united states that all show electrification is the cheapest way to achieve

decarbonization, and that it actually is the lowest cost way to heat our homes in nearly every situation. So there are tremendous benefits. I'm happy to answer any questions about that. If you have that. Those questions, great.

Speaker: Thank you so much. I know that we had some public testimony. Signed up for this item. So I think my request is that we go through the public testimony first and then we move into discussion. If you wouldn't mind staying in the room while we work through some of that, and then we'll bring you guys right back up.

Speaker: Thank you very much.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: So I think we had seven people signed up for testimony. We'll limit it to two minutes. Testimony isn't a regular part of committees, but I thought that for this discussion, it would be good to have an opportunity for folks to come and testify. And normally that happens in full council given our limited time. But I wanted to make sure people had a chance to speak if they wanted to. Could you please call up the folks who have signed up to testify?

Speaker: Michaela mccormick, diane meisenhelder, catherine williams.

Speaker: Good morning.

Speaker: I'm michaela mccormick.

Speaker: I'm a climate activist with. Extinction rebellion. I want to call. Attention to a quote that appeared on one of melanie's slides in 2021. The united nations stated, cutting methane is the strongest lever we have to slow climate change over the next 25 years. Northwest natural gas poisons over 700,000 households with its methane every day, while continually asking for rate increases that feed ever growing annual profits nearing \$100 million this year, northwest natural is asking for a 7% increase in billing rates for its household gas customers. The gas utility filed this request with regulators just two months after receiving a rate increase on

November 1st, 2024. This increase could mean northwest natural bills going up nearly 50% for households since 2021. A third of northwest naturals requested increase is attempting to raise shareholder profits in Portland. We have the city sponsored bill build shift program to begin to protect human health, including from the threat of methane and prevent displacement. Concerns expressed by bipoc community members. Build shift prioritizes bipoc, low income and other marginalized communities with a plan to fight energy reporting and notification of climate and health information for multifamily rental housing. I had more to say, but with limited time, i'll just end with saying.

Speaker: Actually, we are good on time. I miscalculated, so if you want to take the full three minutes, you can and everybody else can too.

Speaker: Okay. Thank you. So the elements of the build shift plan include notification to and information on providing transparency and visibility of energy, performance and costs to give the market more complete information about buildings. Inform renters of potential utility bill expectations and health risks. Reduce displacement of economically vulnerable renters. Support resilience to climate change, and provide a baseline for carbon emissions and future energy investments. Starting in 2026, owners of attached rental housing would be required to notify prospective renters of the following climate and health information at time of application one. Instructions on how to access potential, average and peak monthly energy costs. Two. Resources to help low income renters pay utility bills three. Health risks associated with using natural gas or electric stoves and the benefits of ventilation.

Speaker: Thank you for.

Speaker: Your testimony, I appreciate you. I got to keep people to three minutes just to keep it fair.

Speaker: Okay. You want me to stop?

Speaker: Yes, please. Sorry, but if you could submit written testimony, that'd be fantastic as well. Thank you.

Speaker: Hi, I'm Diane Meisenholder and volunteer with Extinction Rebellion and the Climate Justice Committee of NAACP, PDX, and we and PDX or NAACP has prioritized building build are moving forward almost equivalent of the amount of emissions and transportation are the 38% of emissions from building energy use here in Portland. The city has continued delaying implementation of Merton. The first phase of the Build Shift program, despite over 70% of public testimony in favor of moving forward, political pressure around elections, and from Northwest Natural Gas and large scale landlords have lost us two critical years implementing building emissions reductions and even more shockingly, even just educating low income tenants about basic health and safety. Energy cost information critical for their informed rental decision making, information on how to reduce and get support for utility costs and life saving, cooling and indoor health quality education. The Merton proposals were very mild first steps, and even then there was pushback and unconscionable delay. The city needs to now expedite the community driven policies originated by staff in the Build Shift team. Two years ago, 41 other cities had climate related building standards in place, and that number is likely increased. The city of Portland has committed to a zero building sector by 2050. The tenant group that was part of the process prioritized indoor air quality and emissions reductions policies. By 2024, and maximum indoor air temperature actions by 27. At the very least, the tenant notification should be implemented this year and the data gathering stage and building decarbonization phase in should be expedited to get us back on track and accelerate the path to reducing building emissions. Climate scientists stated long ago that we need to half our emissions by 2030, and

lately their modeling suggests that things are even more severe. 2030 is just five years from now, but locally, world and worldwide emissions continue to increase, with the current administration devastating climate and environmental policies, it's even more critical for localities to take action to mitigate a lesser catastrophe. I will submit this in writing to the team, because I've included past testimony on changes we feel are important to strengthen the merton proposal, and I would encourage you to ask staff for all of the amazing build shift background materials that they helped create and did a really good job of researching. I thanks for this time you for this time and consideration looking at this important issue today.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is catherine williams. I'm the vice president of public affairs and sustainability for northwest natural. We are one of the three investor owned utilities serving the city of Portland and are regulated by the Oregon public utility commission, as well as a myriad of state and federal agencies. This spring, we celebrated 166 years as an energy provider and major employer in the community, and we're proud to serve 2 million people in Oregon and southwest Washington. We have over 1500 employees with about half working at our headquarters, just three blocks from city hall. And approximately 50% of our workforce is represented by local 11 opeiu. My time is short this morning, but I want to share to some concerns as the primary subject of this presentation. Northwest natural received no outreach from the city and was provided no opportunity for meaningful input or response. I do want to appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony this morning for three minutes. We will submit additional concerns in writing and urge the committee to review and standardize procedures for stakeholders while we're still processing the information we have heard today. Here are some facts. One item I won't dispute in

this presentation is that despite delivering more energy than any utility in the state of Oregon, our emissions have remained essentially flat. What she didn't share is something that has become much more well-known and a concern that is growing recently, and that is the gas and electricity systems depend on one another. And the community, including Portland, depends on both. Our customers know this. With increasing concern about power outages, 81% of voters say we need both electricity and natural gas to reliably meet our energy needs. Finally, we remain committed to working towards decarbonized systems and doing so in a way that is affordable and reliable for our customers. We want to be included in this conversation because we live and work in this community. To that end, we respectfully request time on a future agenda to present information to this committee and or council. Direction on how to formalize this request is welcomed. I also want to note that despite filing rate cases, our customers are paying less than they did 20 years ago. And as we look at our decarbonization goals, both the voluntary goals that we put on ourselves, both targets that are now enabled by legislation in Oregon and Washington, we have to balance affordability with decarbonization. Decarbonization is not free, and affordability is a hot topic, not just for utilities, not for the legislature, I'm sure for the City Council, but for everyone across the state. And we want to meaningfully participate in that conversation. Thank you for your time.

Speaker: Thank you. Diego, will you please call the next folks up?

Speaker: Howard bell w paul elder lynn hamlin.

Speaker: Are we ready? Can I go or i'll start. So for the record, my name is howard bell. I'm the business manager for opeiu local 11. And I just want to say thank you to the council members. I represent 93 different organizations. And our newest one is reed college. Recently we just got a contract and I appreciate all the support we

got from the City Council. So thank you for that. So my largest group that I represent is northwest natural. I'm a former employee, worked there for 34 years. And I just want to tell you about some of the progress we made over the years. In 1989, we removed all our old bare pipe with new pipe. 1999 we put in excess flow valves. That was the idea behind that was if there was a strike or a leak, that would shut down the gas. So it wasn't leaking to the atmosphere as a safety item. And then we went after all our leaks and we no longer have leaks in the ground. So right now we have probably the most modern system in the whole country. Now, I want to also address some of the issues around the cost and the rate increases and different things. It's very expensive when you want to do renewables and all this stuff. So that's put back into the rate case so we can do the things that lower the carbon emissions. And also when we talk about \$100 million and everything's \$50 million is going to my members, and those members are out in the community spending a lot of money. They have disposable income, strengthening our economy, along with paying a lot of taxes to the state and to the city. That helps support some of the programs that you want. Another item I want to talk about is some of the health concerns I heard today. I am the co-chair on the western states trust that oversees health and welfare. I see all all the visits, all the illnesses, all the injuries, all the prescription drugs, everything that goes through our members. And over the course of my career, benzene, formaldehyde. We had so much exposure working around natural gas. We're in it all the time, and we don't have any of those issues. We don't have any kind of blood, blood, cancers or nasal cancers, anything. It's just the common injuries with shoulders, knees wearing out. We have those kind of things. And you have diabetes of course, and cholesterol and different things like that. But we don't have any health concerns. So I so it's kind of interesting to me as much exposure as we've had, you would think of anybody

would have it. It'd be our group. We're not seeing any of that. And then as far as as far as safety goes, I mean, it's 50 to 1. When you look at electrification, people getting shocked compared to anything happen with natural gas workers or in in the general public. There's 50 times more homes burned down every year from electricity compared to natural gas. We don't have any of those kind of issues. And I think just to finalize these for the other folks talk, i, I just hope that we can sit down and have a good discussion with all the stakeholders here before we make any kind of moves, because I have a lot of members that count on this job. Thank you.

Speaker: Please proceed.

Speaker: My name is paul elder. I'm the business manager of local 290, and I represent over 5300 licensed professionals, plumbers, steamfitters hvac, r refrigeration, marine fitters between southwest Washington and northern california and 80% of Oregon. When you talk about infrastructure, you don't always see it. And maybe society. We often take it for granted. We're the ones that put it in for you. We're the ones that provide these systems for the comforts of life. The members I represent involved every aspect of piping systems that are allowed for comforts. We, the members, work on our. We work on our own wastewater treatment plant here in Portland, Oregon. We've worked on every major city project in Portland's ever done. Examples are hospitals, city halls, high tech facilities, hydroelectric dam, paper mills, police department, fire departments, port of Portland schools, and much, much, much more. Simply put, there's pipe in a building. We're probably the ones that put it in. Our members are already working on decarbonization. We have partnered with companies such as modern hydrogen that has brought us new technologies that allow us to sequester carbon before it uses a fuel source. Transitions to these. Simply put, we've had the technologies to make. Natural gas is one of the cleanest transition fuels in the world. By pulling the

carbon out and using the raw product for such things as asphalt and shingles for roofs, which we do have rain in Oregon, we will need those. And we do like to travel from spot to spot. That's how we got here today. We now have the technology to pull it out, turn that into hydrogen. Hydrogen can be blended back into a system 20% decrease in emissions. It's a wonderful idea. It works. The first reactor of its kind was put here in the city of Portland in 2023, in December, and it's been working flawlessly since then. It is a model. I've gone all the way to Washington and capitol hill to talk to our politicians to actually promote this. One of the reasons why modern hydrogen and northwest natural gas partners two 90s, because our track record is one of the best safety track records in the piping industry. We spend over \$13 million annually to train our members to do the best in the industry. I myself have piped in natural gas and hydrogen for over 29 years, and have had zero incidents with any of the projects I've worked on, or record shows that it can be done and it can be done safely. Oregon has an opportunity to lead the nation using the technology and modern hydrogen. We can decrease our carbon footprint, decrease our emissions and continue to provide safe, reliable energy choice for Oregonians. I'd like to mention that 38% of electricity that's in this room, and the state of Oregon right now is generated from natural gas. But there's inconvenient facts ignored by proposals of spending forced electrification, namely, on the coldest winter days, natural gas systems in Portland deliver about twice as much energy to the electric system for residential customers and electric utilities in Oregon are as about as use about as much as natural gas to generate electricity. Electricity is delivered by natural gas utilities in the state combined. What's more, natural gas appliances using direct and natural gas are three times as efficient when used directly inside a home where it's used to generate electricity, because much more energy is lost than converting and transmitting the electricity to the rest of the

customers. I don't have much time. I'm sorry, I wish I had more, but thank you for my time, council members, I appreciate it and if you would ever like to know more about it or see my facilities in dalton, I'd be more than happy to show you what we can do for the community. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you for your testimony. You may go next.

Speaker: Hi, my name is lynn hanlon. I'm with extinction rebellion, but just speaking for myself. I'm also a small business owner in Portland.

Speaker: And I'm glad you got to hear the presentation this morning. So you all now know, if you didn't already, about the total nightmare that is methane. Despite what some of the folks here trying to tell you, it is a giant climate killer as well as, you know, statistically it is unsafe and more importantly, unhealthy in the home. So not sure what these guys are all saying, but also electrification creates jobs. So the, you know, the horror stories of, oh dear, I represent all these workers and the implication they're going to be out of work if we electrify, you know, there's going to be more jobs created. So yeah. So now that you know why we need to get rid of methane, a good start is to implement, fully implement the build shift program, especially starting with tenant notification. And this was opposed and tried to be delayed by folks like northwest natural for, you know, no good reason. And corporate large corporate landlords. And they have managed to delay the implementation of build shift. And the tenant notification is just the simplest thing ever. I mean, it's notifying tenants about the dangers of having the gas stoves and methane and, you know, a lot of other things that the other folks have already told you about. So, like, there's really no reason to not fully support and implement the build shift program. The last City Council managed to drag their heels. I hate to think it, but, you know, I'm assuming that they were listening to the corporate folks and not the 70% of, you know, community members that testified saying this is

important. We need to do it. But you guys are the new City Council and you know how to act. You know how to do stuff. So I'm really encouraged by that. And I'm looking forward to you all acting on build shift and we can't afford to delay. And I know that northwest natural they're like, oh we need to do this later. We need to do more studies. We need to delay, delay, delay so we don't have time to delay. And right now, with the federal government being our worst enemy, instead of helping us on climate and especially climate justice, it's like anything to do with climate justice is just toast at the federal level. You all are here and you are our last hope. You are our heroes. So thank you.

Speaker: Thank you so much to all the testifiers. Is there anyone else signed up?

Speaker: Just one more samantha hernandez.

Speaker: Thank you for being here. Samantha.

Speaker: I film. Good morning, councilors. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today. My name is samantha hernandez, and I am with the Oregon physicians for social responsibility. And today I just really wanted to expand on the health benefits of electrification. And the main one being clean air. And I don't know about you all, but i, I really love clean air. It's my favorite thing to do is to breathe clean air. And I really love knowing that when I'm making my rice and beans, my fried plantains at home, that I am not exposing myself and my loved ones to health harming pollutants like nitrogen oxides, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide and benzene, which melanie already mentioned. There has been studies that benzene is emitted when gas stoves are on and when they are off as well. And there was a study that came out last year. It's really good reading. I would highly recommend it. It was a study put together by Oregon psr, sierra club verde, but it's called Oregon's hidden air pollution problem. And in this study, we found that it is estimated that the outdoor fossil fuel pollution from Oregon's homes and businesses costs almost

\$88 million annually. And this is very expensive. And so electrification also provides us cost savings both to our pockets but also to our health. And I think that it's also important to take this into consideration. And the number jumps up to 1 billion, actually, if we take into account the overall fossil fuel induced climate change damages to our property, our agriculture, our infrastructure and our overall social stability. And I also wanted to really quickly talk about this really amazing study that was conducted in new york by a group called we act for environmental justice, and they actually provided a group of to a group of. People who lived in affordable housing complexes, an induction stove, and they measured the air quality before and after when there was a gas stove, and then when there was an induction stove and they found a massive decrease in nox, and people had the option to either go back to their gas stove or keep their induction stove. And every single person who participated in this study kept their new induction stove. And so I only have 10s left, so i'll end it at that. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify today.

Speaker: Thank you so much for being here. I appreciate everyone taking time out of their day to come and testify. Like I said, we don't always have testimony at committee, but I'm glad that we got the opportunity to hear from a variety of voices. Now, I would like to call back up the presenters for our discussion and q&a portion with the committee here, and I want to make sure I know that a lot of my colleagues were eager to hear about, okay, if renewable fuels are not necessarily the path forward, then what? What are the steps that we're going to take? So I think, brian, we're definitely going to ask you a lot of questions. And with that, I see I have my colleagues have some of their hands raised. So first I will go to councilor novick and then councilor Ryan and i, just before we get started, I just wanted to frame as well that I think that it's important that we're having this discussion about how renewable fuels and the things that have been taught around it are going to

directly impact our discussions and any future movement towards electrification and decarbonization at the city, because there is a lot for us to learn as a council. And I think the climate committee has to have the burden of carrying this information and making sure that we're moving our city forward. And as many people have already stated, we don't have a lot of time to make these changes. So with that, I will now pass it off to councilor novick.

Speaker: Thank you, chair murillo, I have a question for miss saylor. One of your earlier slides. I didn't keep track of which one it was, showed what appeared to be the how many units of emissions, and it didn't say what the units were from pge, pacificorp and northwest natural. And I saw the numbers rather surprised me. It made it seem like northwest natural had a really small percentage of emissions because it had like pge 6.6 million, northwest natural, 57,000. I want you to like explain that.

Speaker: Yeah, that's correct because pge so these are the emissions for the entire territory that those utilities serve. So that's one thing to keep in mind. And pge does serve I think it's three quarters of the commercial and industrial properties in the state. And. Northwest. Natural. The direct use natural gas is a pretty small percentage. I think it's 6 or 7% of the total emissions for the.

Speaker: Residential.

Speaker: For commercial and residential.

Speaker: It's closer to 9%. If you include industrial.

Speaker: Closer to 9% if you include these numbers, by the way, are available on the Oregon department of energy. And also, actually the city of Portland has a pretty helpful assessment of carbon emissions for the city that staff facilitates. So I would just encourage you to look at that. So yes. And that is something that's important to note that pge has some work to do too, as does pacific power.

Speaker: But I mean the numbers were I mean, it looked like northwest natural emissions weren't even 5% of pge. If it's 57,000. And again, I don't know what the units were versus 6.6 million. And I was just wondering, does that mean that currently like per unit of energy, northwest natural is has less emissions than pge?

Speaker: I don't know the how to answer that question without going, yeah, go ahead.

Speaker: I can offer an answer. Councilor novick. So I think this came up in a previous committee meeting, the electricity supplied by pge and pacific power does have a greater carbon intensity on the generation side. The case for building electrification. Again, as I mentioned at the start of my presentation, focuses on heat pump appliances, which are two, three, four times as efficient in heating and in space and water heating than gas alternatives. So it actually kind of flips the math on its head a little bit with the end use. Once you start to increase the proportion of heat pumps in households. Additionally, the and this is what a lot of deep decarbonization studies show. The basis, the logic behind electrification. When we're thinking about an economy wide decarbonization pathway, is that once you electrify these end uses, the grid will become cleaner over time. So heat pumps produce emissions right now at pg impacts, energy mix, solar and wind are the cheapest generating resources in the us right now. There are about, I think, 80% of new generation globally and about 70% of new generation in states like texas. And so as the proportion of renewables increases on the grid, those climate benefits compound. So a study like rocky mountain institute, for example, conducted in Oregon, showed, I think, over the life cycle of a new heat pump installed, you have an 84% emissions reduction compared to gas. So that's that's essentially the logical case for it. Even though and I would just note gas end uses are a subset of electrical

end uses. All all homes have an account with pge or pac. About half of half of Portland's homes have an account with northwest natural.

Speaker: Okay. But I mean, I have to say that just looking at those numbers, which really surprised me, it seems like I'm more worried about pge meeting its goals of increasing the use of renewable energy than I am about northwest natural, really. I mean, just in terms of the numbers. But another question I wanted to ask you, miss saylor, is. What can the City Council do about northwest naturals emissions? And this is actually for the whole panel. I mean, we're not the puc, we're not the deq, so we can't monitor and enforce compliance with the climate protection program. We can try to join the county and educating the public about the health effects of gas stoves, as opposed to electric or induction stoves. But what I mean, I would have liked to institute the ban on on methane gas in new construction, but the ninth circuit said we can't do that. So what can the city do about methane emissions?

Speaker: Yeah, I love that question. So first of all, to your to your question about pge, I think continue to put the pressure on them. But I will say that the technologies that are available to pge are vastly more implementable, right, than, than the technologies that are available to northwest natural. I just put that put that out for you. To your question about pathways. We'd be happy to come back and give a presentation on pathways that are available to local governments. We do this regularly. We're communicating with cities around the state about what can be done. Despite the ninth circuit's decision on berkeley, that was a very narrow decision addressing just that particular policy pathway. For example, berkeley has subsequently adopted a very interesting, frankly and innovative policy that addresses the appliances that are retrofit the retrofit problem. Right, because that's an issue where we don't what is the insertion point at which we can intervene to allow homes to and encourage homes to retrofit appliances from gas appliances to

more energy efficient heating and cooling. And so they have the insertion point at the time of sale. So they've been doing building emissions and energy reporting. They've already have that implemented now at the time of sale. They have this very innovative approach where the buyer puts up 2500, the seller puts up 2500, there's a \$5,000 escrow amount, and the buyer has three years within which to make the retrofits that are called for by the ordinance. So that, for example, is again, a very innovative approach that's not disallowed by the ninth circuit berkeley decision. And then there are other pathways. For example, the city of ashland has just adopted, just in February of this year, unanimously, a carbon pollution impact fee. So it is a very small intervention. It is new residential homes that decide to build with a gas appliance, and there is a fee associated with the social cost of carbon associated with any gas appliance that's installed. And think of it as eliminating the sort of dirty discount that we know our fossil fuels enjoy. So it's a disincentive. It's a small disincentive. Hopefully it doesn't generate any money. No one builds any homes with new gas appliances. But if somebody insists on that gas, water heater or gas furnace, they have to pay for the externality of making that decision.

Speaker: I happen to be a bit of a social cost of carbon geek, so I have to ask what social cost of carbon is ashland using?

Speaker: I love that question because there was much discussion about it. We don't want to use the politically acceptable right or adopted social cost of carbon, as we can see, that can go back and forth depending on on who's in the administration. So ashland relied on the well-vetted report underlying the discussions that epa had on the social cost of carbon. So it is there's a there's a table that's presented in that report, and the social cost of carbon that they chose is associated with what what that report, again, vetted by other scientists assigned. And I think it's something like \$234, 200, if I remember, off the top of my.

Speaker: Head unit of co2.

Speaker: As opposed to the outrageous \$50 a ton figure, the, the inequitable obama administration adopted.

Speaker: You got it. That's right. And, you know, as scientists will say, there are problems with the social cost of carbon. You I'd love to have a conversation with you about that that we are we're discounting future generations experience, right, of what we're doing today. So that social cost of carbon actually could be much higher. But ashland chose a very appropriate, scientifically vetted number. But that hopefully is high enough again, to get people to think about what it is they're doing.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: And councilor novick, just to add in, I think before we just leave that point, the reason I understand your concerns with with pge and pax emissions, we're not I don't want you to think we're sort of in the shoes of advocating for them. I think we are frustrated with how these three investor owned utilities are serving Portlanders on emissions reductions and costs. So I just wanted to make that point clear. Despite that, the case for building electrification exists right now and will continue to be more compelling as the grid, based on what we're seeing in terms of cost of renewable generation in the market. Decarbonizes. So I just want to make that point. I think in addition to the climate and health standards for existing buildings, which I know came up in a previous committee meeting, which we think is a great policy to consider. First, I do think this this council could be looking at and samantha had referred to this week's study where they went into social housing and replaced gas ranges with with induction ranges. I think it'd be interesting to start looking at something similar, identifying particular multifamily housing or particular neighborhoods in Portland, where we can use this sort of a pilot to study all the sort of technical, economic and other barriers and the

incentives that exist and what kind of gaps there are in incentives when it comes to switching homes from from gas to electric. So I used to live in eugene beyond toxics down in eugene, did an interesting study in the in the bethel neighborhood, where they worked with the eugene water and electricity board to sort of have these personal consultations, home energy scores, and then show what incentives are available. And, and at least in eugene, for to replace a gas water heater with a heat pump, water heater. The incentives that existed at the time were enough to cover that upfront cost with with things like on bill financing that a-web offers. So there's a lot of different ways to approach this from an incentive side as well as a regulatory side. But I think it does require council looking at where the gaps are in what pge and pac offering on the incentive side right now, and how to help low income and moderate income households electrify at similar rates to wealthier households.

Speaker: And there's so much we could say here. I just want to say a couple of things we heard from folks whose whose work relies on what northwest natural does. And, you know, from my personal perspective, I see northwest natural as a good employer. People don't leave. People like to work for that company and customer service. People like to receive customer service for northwest natural. If there are ways that we could get the utility to participate in in what is possible to help our our city decarbonize, that would be personally something I am looking forward to. One thing that we know needs to happen at the public utility commission is combined gas and electric planning process, so that we can get some better insight into how we may need gas in small amounts for peakers, for example. And, you know, I'm hoping that that process is something that our public utility commission can undertake. I don't I hope that you don't see our presentation, my presentation here as as an attack on the company, but rather an

opportunity to explore questions that we have about the solutions that they offer. The modern hydrogen pilot is a perfect example, where it requires 2 to 3 times the methane in order to produce the hydrogen. You know, it seems to me to be working counterproductively, whereas I'll just point to Vermont natural gas, a gas only utility in Vermont. You look at their integrated resource plan. They are they are recognizing that there is an electrification need. They are participating in that process. They are installing heat pumps and heat pump water heaters. They are assisting in leasing those that might be not be Northwest Natural's path, but there are opportunities for the gas utility to participate in this transition.

Speaker: Can I just add to that? I mean, in Councilor Novick's question about, you know, the relative size of the emissions of these two energy systems is a good one, but I think that one of the reasons why you hear so much enthusiasm amongst third party advocates and climate activists about electrification is that unlike the gas utility gas situation, renewable energy is the cheapest way to produce electricity, which is why, in actual fact, it's over 95% of the new generation in this country over the last three years has come from renewables. It's and that's not because of climate policy, that's because of economics. So with electrification, you have one. If you look at the grid, the last 20 years, our emissions from electricity have gone down significantly, almost 20% lower than they were in 2020. That has not happened in the gas system our emissions have gone up with. If you look at gas nationally. Secondly, the technologies to reduce emissions on on electricity exist and are more economic than current generation. It's the opposite. With gas to reduce emissions with the gas system, you would dramatically increase costs. Many of the estimates are as much as six times the cost to get a reduction in emissions from the gas industry. So in other words, like yes, it may look small, but but the

path to a clean energy system exists with technology that's here today. On the electric side, it does not exist on the gas side.

Speaker: And to be clear, I think we need to get away from methane. And by the way, I think we should stop saying natural gas and just say methane gas whenever possible, as quickly as possible. It was just that the numbers seemed to me to kind of drive home the idea that, you know, we need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels to produce electricity and that, I mean, that's, you know, that's a that's a huge that's a huge issue.

Speaker: Yes. But at least we have a law that that is mandating that where we don't on the gas side other than the cpp.

Speaker: And, you know, they did drop emissions 10% in one year despite low growth and the opportunities that they are exploring are really interesting virtual power plants, allowing folks to generate their own electricity and using our system more responsibly, more efficiently. So all that to say, there are a lot of innovative opportunities that are very easily implemented. Councilor Ryan, did you had a question?

Speaker: I yeah, I was going to say.

Speaker: We've been talking.

Speaker: We have a chance for councilor Ryan's questions. Are you almost finished? Okay. Councilor. Ryan.

Speaker: Thank you. Chair. Clark, could you please read the title of this item again?

Speaker: Certainly. Item two. Committee discussion on electrification.

Speaker: On electrification. Okay, so I was really looking forward to a critical analysis, the kind of the life cycle like you, some experts did, I think it was last month. Chair on renewable gas. That didn't happen today. What I experienced today was the topic in my opinion should have been why natural gas is bad because

that's what we experienced today. So I think it was a disingenuous title of this item. And I'm disappointed that because I wanted to hear the life cycle electrification, I want to hear that same critical analysis of from mining to what we do with recycling and waste at the end, and that has not happened yet in this committee. And I really look forward to that conversation. And I do think that we all want the same goal. I don't think anyone doesn't want fresh air. I don't think that anyone doesn't want to decarbonize. I think the last speaker got to some of the topics around the what electrification provides, and I appreciate that, but I just have to say to the chair, I hope that when we go forward, we can have more transparency about the title of the topic and we can stay focused on the topic. And then when we go forward and if it's about northwest natural gas in particular, we can include them in the dialog. I think tension is important. You're alluding to that and I appreciate it. We need people at the table having these tough conversations. So this is more of a statement that what I experienced today was really different than what I, as a legislator, came into this meeting to experience. I'm not disappointed in what I listened to. I was all ears, and it was helpful to hear that. I'm just saying, when I came in this morning, I thought this was going to be a very different item than I experienced, so I just had to state that for the for the record, I don't think it was good government in terms of transparency. This morning on the item.

Speaker: Councilor Ryan, thank you for the statement. Would you like me just to offer a short response and data point on the life cycle question?

Speaker: Of course you're up here. And if someone from northwest natural wants to come up.

Speaker: Yeah. Is it alright if I share my, my screen again on this.

Speaker: Yeah. Go for it.

Speaker: Okay. Thank you.

Speaker: Citations.

Speaker: I do have a slide to answer this. Yeah I mean I do, you know, part of my job is reviewing these committee meetings. And I do recall that question and I apologize that we weren't able to get to it during the presentations that we had. This is from a colleague of mine at nyu. So obviously none of us are satisfied with fossil fuel of fossil fuel based political economy in terms of its externalities and in terms of its life cycle emissions. When you look at when you directly compare heat pump electrification with energy, energy mix and even the most efficient gas end uses, electrification wins. That's been demonstrated by the ipcc, by the international energy agency, by multiple state, local and third party studies. There is no free lunch when it comes to energy. All forms of energy have externalities. This is a study by benjamin sovacool. He is a lead author of the ipcc's sixth assessment report. He is one of the leading thinkers on energy transitions, and there's some sort of illustrative sort of additions to this chart. But essentially what this shows is that the Oregon's energy grid, which is moving increasingly towards solar, towards wind, with that legacy hydro, the this is a meta analysis that shows that the sort of universe of externalities associated with that generation is going to be less than fossil fuels. So I think sometimes folks in the gas industry are kind of anticipating that tomorrow we're going to make a transition to all electric buildings. This is a multi-decadal transition that needs to be planned by governments. But the idea is that we're actually reducing overall externalities in the energy system over time if we switch to renewables, i, I think a separate presentation that that really gets into the issues with, say, lithium mining and stuff like that could be helpful to this council if it chooses to. But that's the overall picture. I'd also say when it comes to things like battery storage, we didn't talk today about some of the alternative technologies that are coming on because like these gas system alternatives, they're

just not proven at scale. So we kind of just have to assume that these are the externalities we're talking about. And there might be even lower impact energy storage options in the future.

Speaker: Currently, local government doesn't even provide an easy way for consumers to dispose of and recycle their batteries. You know, you have to spend extra money to do that. So we have like those tangible things we have to look at. And I appreciate you starting to answer that, but I really do want to see that critical analysis of the life cycle, from mining to what we do with waste. It's not there right now.

Speaker: If that late author is able to be beamed in, I think that would be a great presentation. Council.

Speaker: Yes. Yeah, we'd be happy to come back with some facts on that.

Speaker: I think you will be pretty satisfied to see that the overall impacts, all those externalities that you might measure are far less with renewable energy economy than with the fossil fuel economy.

Speaker: And my last statement, question dialog is then we had the challenge of looking at how to expand the infrastructure of electrification in Portland. And we looked at the, the plans from pge to go into forest park as 500 acres, and we rejected that. And so there is the question, what are we going to do about these trade offs? And there was really not a very spirited debate about that trade off when we had that conversation. It was just more that that is bad, and we can't take down the trees and the frogs and, you know, it's a sacred place, I get that, but I'm not hearing what the solution is. So I just hope we can start moving to solutions so we can have so we can move forward. I think the shame thing is exhausting at times, and we have to figure out how we can get to solutions so we can have

cleaner air and we can have decarbonization. So it has to be bold. And I look forward to those critical conversations. Chair.

Speaker: Thank you. Yeah. Thank you. Sorry I will say it's 1129. So we're almost at time. I appreciate this discussion and your feedback is noted. Councilor Ryan, i, I believe you voted also to save the trees with the pge. And I think that was something that actually was a pretty broad discussion during that. Was that the alternatives for where they could put the power lines were not proven in the materials that we received during that quasi judicial decision, which is why I personally voted not to cut down the trees, because I thought that alternative options were not adequately explored, as the company is required to produce.

Speaker: And we had that conversation, but I was the only one that brought up that trade off. And it was interesting to me that we didn't have that robust debate.

Speaker: I think I disagree, I think a lot of us brought that up. But anyways, our next meeting is Thursday, July 10th. We will be talking with city staff about climate friendly active transportation policies, the economic opportunities analysis, and returning to an item we postponed from the spring on c40 climate cities. And with that, I will adjourn the meeting of the climate resilience and land use committee. Thank you.