



# Joint Chamber Survey Report:

*Member Feedback on  
Building Decarbonization &  
Mandated Electrification*



## **SEPTEMBER 2022**

---

*Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce  
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce*



Eugene Area  
Chamber of  
Commerce



---

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents..... 2

Executive Summary ..... 3

Demographic ..... 4

Awareness ..... 5

Natural Gas Use and Local Business ..... 6

    Regulation position ..... 6

    Energy Use & Decision Making ..... 7

    Government Intervention & Regulation ..... 8

---

# Executive Summary

The City of Eugene is poised to act in Fall 2022 on whether to ban natural gas and other fossil fuel infrastructure in new residential homes, and possibly commercial and industrial buildings in the future.

To understand better how local businesses feel about these proposed actions to restrict natural gas use in Eugene buildings, the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce conducted a member survey in late Summer 2022. This report outlines the basic summary of the responses received from 235 local businesses.

## The survey contained three parts:

- **Demographic** – geographic and industry sector representation
- **Awareness** – gauging awareness of local policy efforts
- **Natural Gas Use and Local Business**– understanding energy use, impacts, and preference

The data from this survey shows:

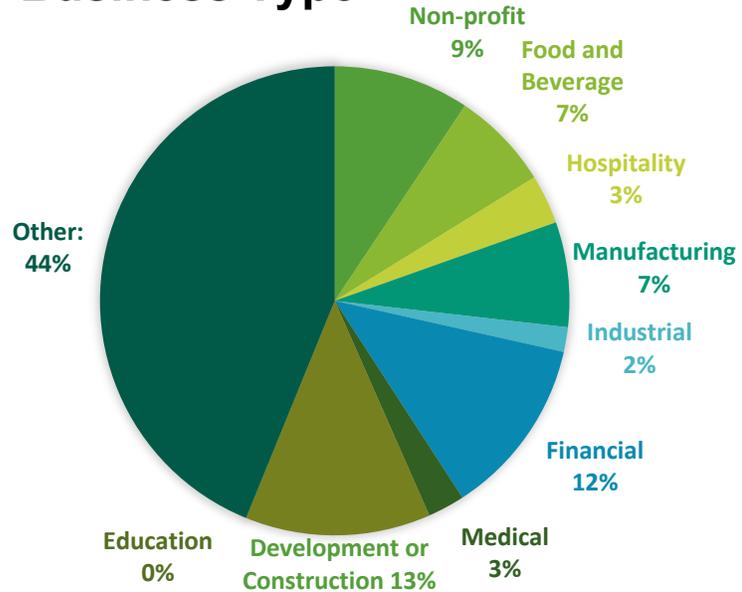
- 79% of respondents representing commercial businesses **do not support** a ban on natural gas infrastructure in new homes and 82% **do not support** a ban on natural gas in commercial and industrial buildings
- Over 20% of respondents said they would **consider relocating** their business if a ban went into place, representing as many as 1000 local jobs
- Over 75% of respondents believe carbon reduction related mandates should come from **state or federal governments**
- Over 92% of respondents support local regulations on natural gas being decided by a **public vote**

# Demographic

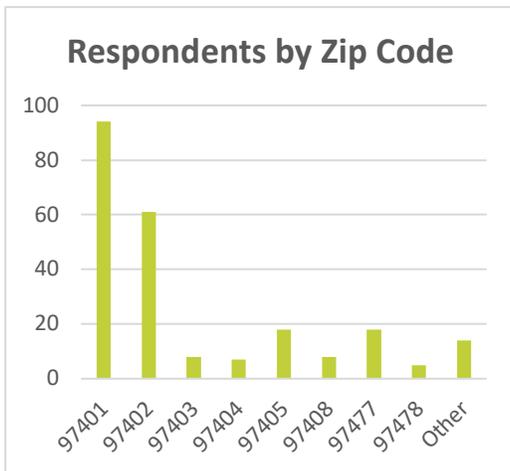
The Business Type graph shows the respective industries represented in this survey.

Forty-four percent of respondents selected “Other” which includes real estate, heating, IT, janitorial services, retail, mortuary services, special districts, insurance, communications and marketing, housing etc.

## Business Type



Forty percent of the respondents represent business near downtown, where natural gas replaced high emission steam energy in the last 15 years.



Remaining respondents represent mostly West Eugene businesses with a small representation from North Eugene and South Eugene.

Most respondents, 64%, represent commercial business. Of the remaining, 16% represent industrial business and nearly 20% marked “Neither”.

---

# Awareness

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to share how much awareness they had of the current work at City Council.



**94% Said they were aware** that City Council is currently contemplating an ordinance to ban natural gas in new buildings. (Beginning with new low-rise residential by June 30, 2023 and discussing including new commercial and industrial buildings as well.)



**84% Said they were aware** that City Council is currently discussing how to decarbonize and/or ban natural gas use for all existing residential and commercial buildings by 2035, and industrial buildings by 2050.

---

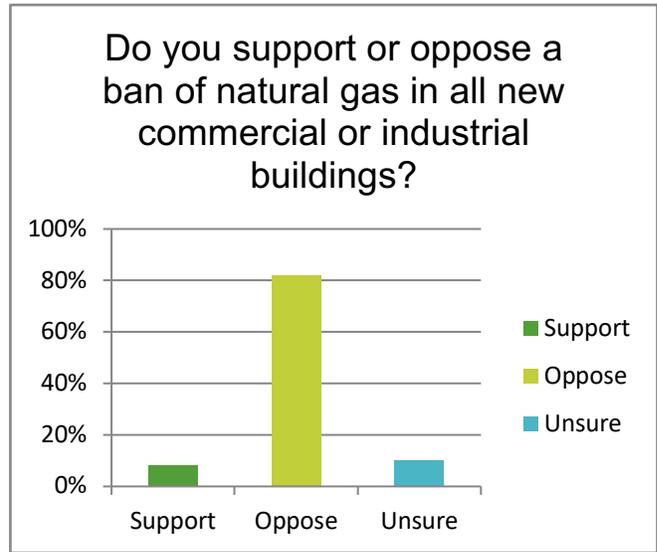
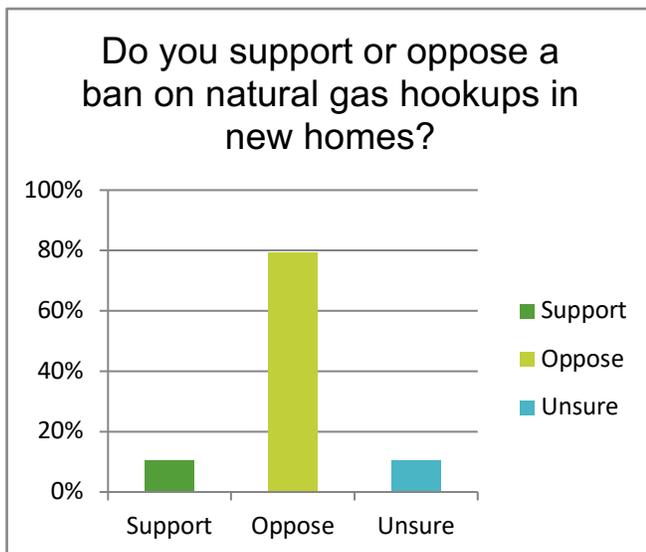
# Natural Gas Use and Local Business

This section of the survey seeks to better understand how respondents use natural gas and feel about potential regulations on the energy source.

More than 50% of respondents use natural gas in their business, with over 70% using a hybrid of energy sources.

## Regulation position

By far, most respondents oppose a ban on natural gas in new homes and commercial and industrial buildings. Respondents in support of these kinds of regulations about equal those who are unsure.

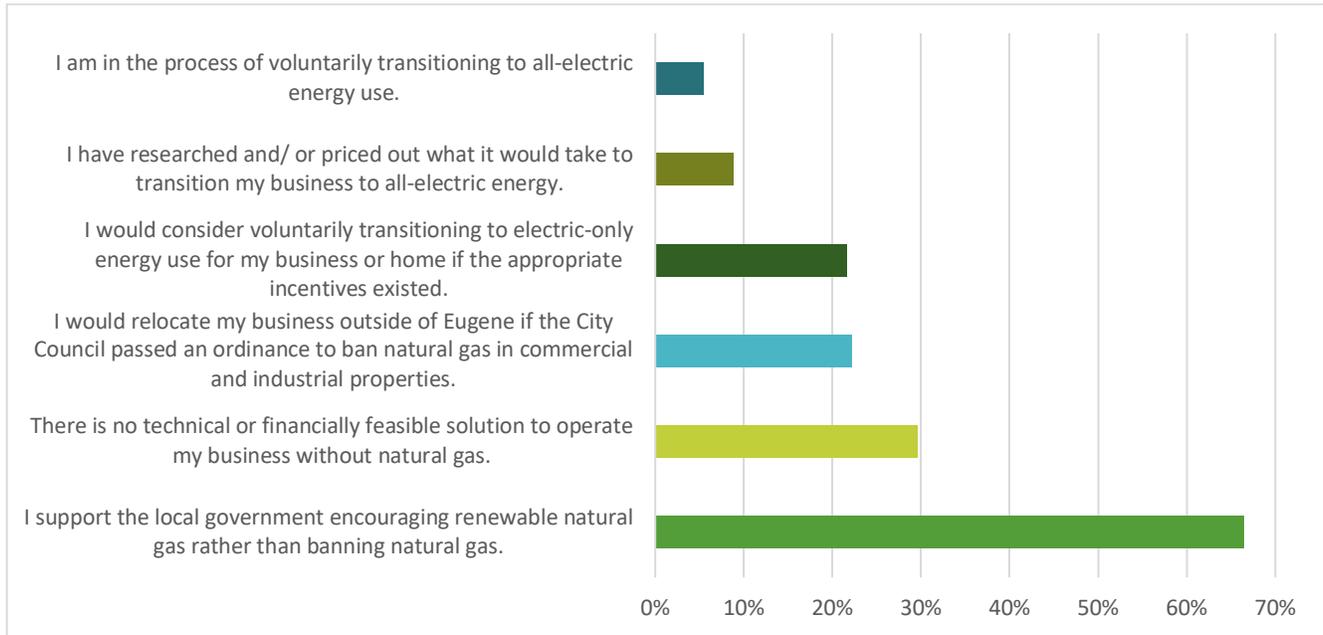


## Public Vote

Of note, when asked if respondents thought a regulation of this nature should be decided either by City Council directly or a public vote, 92% of respondents believed a decision should go to a public vote.

## Energy Use & Decision Making

Respondents were asked to check all that apply for a series of responses related to electrification of their business and how they would choose to do so.



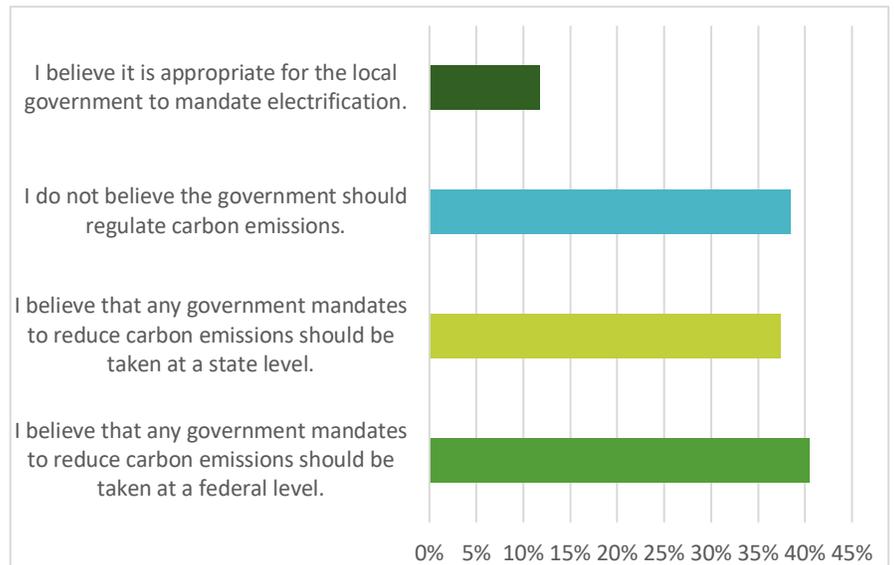
Notable trends from this question highlight:

- Respondents **generally support local government encouraging renewable natural gas** rather than banning natural gas
- Nearly a third **do not believe there is a technical or financially feasible** solution to operate their business without natural gas
- More than 20% would **consider relocating their business** if a natural gas ban was passed, with initial estimates suggesting this represents as many as 1000 potential jobs lost in Eugene
- Nearly 20% **would consider making a transition** in their business or home to electric-only energy were there appropriate incentives to do so

---

## Government Intervention & Regulation

Combined, most respondents believe that carbon emissions should be regulated at the state or federal level, with over a third objecting to government intervention at all. Just over 10% support local government mandates for electrification.



## Questions & Concerns

While some businesses were unsure of their opinion, and a smaller minority supported or felt neutral about the process, most respondents opposed any potential ban on natural gas for their business or home.

Businesses surveyed raised many questions and concerns when asked if there was any additional information they would like from the City of Eugene and our elected officials.

### The most frequent concerns or questions raised include:

- ❖ What would a transition cost our city and who pays for it? How do businesses or individuals afford the increase in energy costs when no competitive alternative exists to regulate costs?
- ❖ How do we ensure our energy remains resilient if we cannot use natural gas? What is the city prepared to do to ensure the existing electrical grid can handle the increase in usage?
- ❖ What do we do if our businesses cannot run without natural gas? How is this going to impact our economic prosperity goals to recruit and retain businesses?
- ❖ Since we know not all of EWEB's power comes from renewable sources, do we know that a natural gas ban would reduce net carbon emissions?