

Developing Issue

BANNING NATURAL GAS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In recent years, many localities have enacted laws or considered curtailing the use of natural gas in new and existing buildings, including in commercial kitchens. In 2019, Berkeley, California became the first city in the United States to ban natural gas hook-ups in new buildings. Since then, cities in multiple states have adopted similar bans on natural gas, creating a patchwork of ordinances that make operating restaurants difficult.



NATIONAL
RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION



ADVOCATES ARGUE

Banning natural gas connections will help address climate change and claim their actions are necessary due to inaction on the issue at the federal level.

HOWEVER, GAS-POWERED APPLIANCES IN COMMERCIAL KITCHENS LIKE STOVES, OVENS, FRYERS, AND OTHER EQUIPMENT PRODUCE NOMINAL EMISSIONS. THESE BANS WOULD HAVE AN IMMEDIATE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY, WITH LITTLE TO NO EFFECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE OVERALL.

RESTAURANT IMPACT

Natural gas continues to be the preferred cooking energy source in a majority of restaurants across the country. According to recent research by the National Restaurant Association:

76%
OF RESTAURANTS USE NATURAL GAS

87% OF FULL-SERVICE

60% OF LIMITED SERVICE

Source: National Restaurant Association Research Group survey of restaurant operators, July 14-Aug. 5, 2022

Banning natural gas use would have a unique and detrimental effect on restaurants. In fact, 94% of operators of restaurants that use natural gas believe that bans would negatively impact their business. Since a flame is critical to cooking a variety of dishes,

90% of restaurateurs using natural gas say **LOSING THE ABILITY TO COOK WITH AN OPEN FLAME FROM NATURAL GAS WOULD NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE QUALITY OF FOOD THAT THEY SERVE.**

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PUBLIC SUPPORT

Consumers play a critical role in every aspect of a restaurant's business. Currently, public support for banning natural gas connections is a low 20%. Consumer research also shows that:

60%

**OPPOSE BANNING NATURAL
GAS CONNECTIONS FOR
BUSINESSES AFTER HEARING
ABOUT OPERATOR CONCERNS**

70%

**FEEL THAT NATURAL GAS
IS IMPORTANT TO THE
SUCCESS OF THE RESTAURANT
INDUSTRY**

66%

**ARE CONCERNED ABOUT
NATURAL GAS BANS AND
THE FINANCIAL IMPACTS
THEY WOULD IMPOSE ON
SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD
RESTAURANTS**

Source: National Restaurant Association survey conducted by Morning Consult, Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2022.

WHY IS NATURAL GAS SO IMPORTANT TO RESTAURANTS?

Costs to retrofit existing structures to convert to electricity will likely be cost prohibitive for smaller operations, and the demand to obtain the needed appliances for commercial kitchens will further strain our supply chain. Restaurant operators with one or two locations would likely be the most adversely affected by a natural gas ban. Further:

- ✔ **Natural gas appliances provide cost savings for restaurants:** [Gas ranges typically cost 10-30% less to operate on an ongoing basis.](#)
- ✔ **Gas ranges provide ease of use and longer lifespans** than comparable electric models.
- ✔ **Heated outdoor spaces allow restaurants to operate in cold weather**, providing better dining experiences and additional revenue stream.
- ✔ **During natural disasters and power outages, many restaurants can safely keep food and drink stored at appropriate temperatures** by using natural gas-powered generators, saving money on food losses and providing peace of mind.
- ✔ **Retrofitting existing buildings to handle the electric capacity required by a restaurant is extremely costly** for an industry with already tight margins (estimated in the hundreds of thousands by some operators).
- ✔ **Professional chefs prefer the control of an open flame** which greatly affects quality of food served.



BOTTOM LINE

Restaurants are an integral part of the communities they serve. As such, they strive to be good stewards of those communities and the environment. Now, more than ever, restaurants are aware of the importance of reducing their environmental impact and increasing their sustainability practices.

However, banning the use of natural gas in commercial kitchens would have devastating effects on the restaurant industry – hitting local and independent restaurants the hardest. The costs to convert existing building infrastructure to handle the power capacity needed to operate a

commercial kitchen alone would be prohibitive for many locally owned restaurants. Finally, mandating natural gas bans while the industry is still mired in debt accrued during the COVID-19 pandemic, and facing an extended period of record inflation, will only exacerbate these problems.

**RESTAURANT OWNERS AND OPERATORS
WANT TO BE A PART OF THE CLIMATE
CHANGE CONVERSATION BUT BANNING A
RELIABLE AND AFFORDABLE SOURCE OF
ENERGY IS A DISASTROUS MISTAKE
FOR THE INDUSTRY.**

MORE INFORMATION:
[RESTAURANT.ORG/NATURAL-GAS](https://restaurant.org/natural-gas)

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