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Local environmental organization demonstrates pollution from gas stoves

By: Robert Desaulniers
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After Eugene's natural gas ban was repealed, a local group is still urging residents to switch to electric appliances.

EUGENE, Ore. – With Eugene's recent repeal of a ban on natural gas in new home construction, a local group is conducting a special study to figure out gas levels in old homes.

Beyond Toxics is a non-profit environmental justice organization based in Eugene who were in favor of the city's ban on natural gas in new low-rise housing. After the ban was repealed, the group used special equipment to find just how many toxic gases stove tops and ovens fueled by natural gas really release into a home.



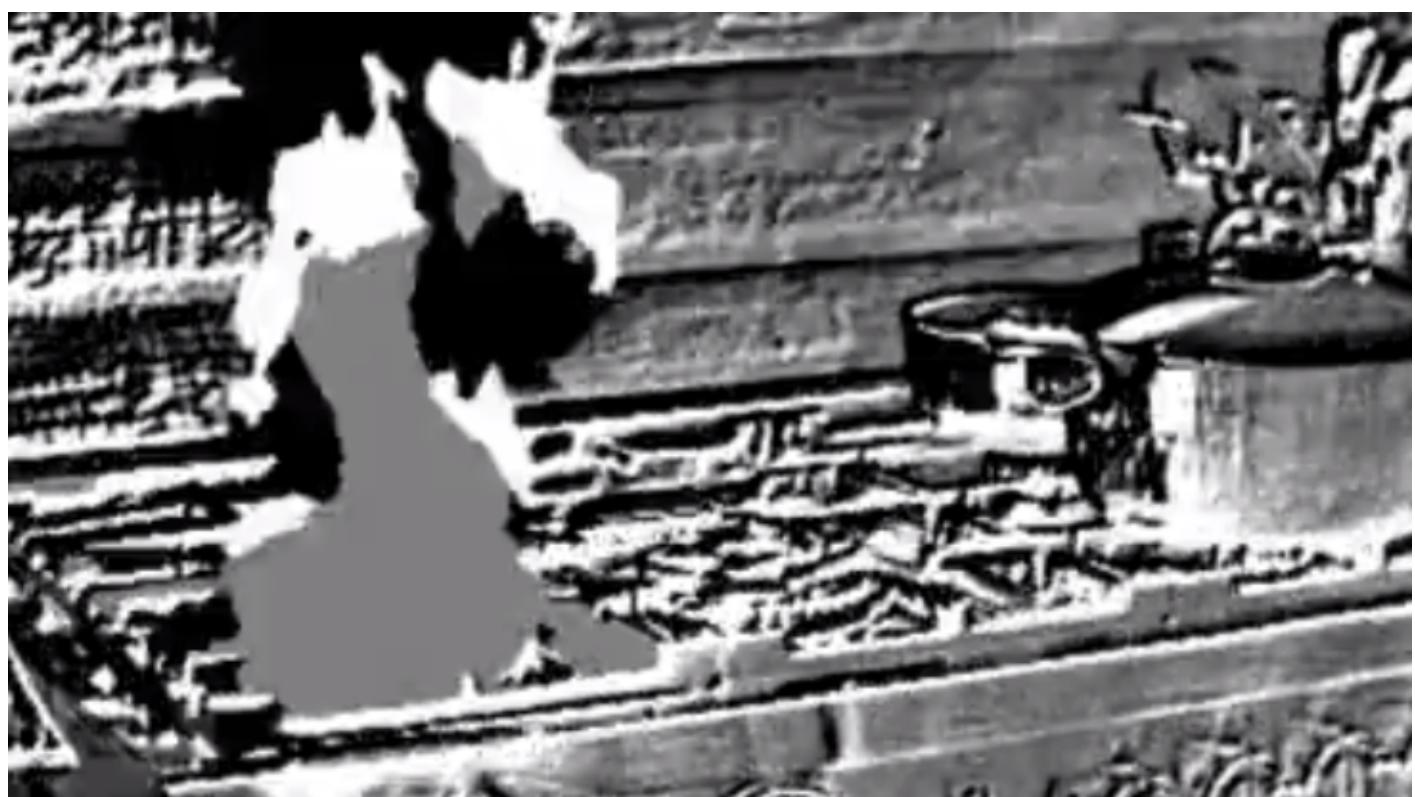
Eugene City Council repeals natural gas ban

By: Robert Desaulniers

On July 20, Beyond Toxics used an industrial-grade methane gas optical camera to film gases in local homes, including methane, hydrocarbons and nitrogen peroxide. Researchers said they found extremely high levels of these gases, most likely caused

from the use of stove tops and ovens.

"On there you can see the methane gas, now we're going to light it, it's going to change quite a bit," said Mason Leavitt, Beyond Toxic's GIS Coordinator, as he demonstrated the camera's capabilities. "And right here on the camera you kind of see a big grey part, and up above you can see the clouds of pollution. See, I can kind of wave my hand above it, it's not a big flame"



Leavitt said that cooking every day with a gas stove can raise one's risk for bronchitis and other lung diseases. Nitrogen Dioxide is known to be associated with childhood asthma and other chronic respiratory problems. Other gases let off by natural gas appliances are also associated with a number of other health concerns.

"The primary purpose we use the infrared camera for is we think it helps people understand and see the pollution, but the other thing we can do is see how different vents work," Leavitt said. "The average vent we found that extends out of the burner often does not suck up any of the pollution."





Leavitt advised those looking to replace their stove to consider going electric, as electric appliances release far less pollutants than ones that use natural gas. He also advised buying things like HEPA and carbon filters to reduce carbon dioxide. For those who aren't looking to replace their gas stove anytime soon, he advised reducing how often it's used and instead trying something like an air fryer.

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Robert Desaulniers

Digital Content Manager