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Oregon officials, activists call on AG Rosenblum to investigate NW Natural



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PORTLAND, Ore. (KOIN) — Climate activists and state legislators are calling on Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum to investigate Northwest Natural for its alleged role in misleading customers on the negative effects of gas stoves.

In a letter written to Rosenblum on Monday, dozens of Oregon lawmakers and organizations accused the gas company of denying and withholding information on the air quality risks posed by its products and services.

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“While the gas industry succeeded for several decades in clouding scientific literature around gas stoves and respiratory health, a broad consensus has since emerged in the literature confirming the links between gas stove emissions, indoor NOx concentrations, and asthma risk,” the letter said. “...both NW Natural and the American Gas Association have continued to pay consultants to cast doubt around the scientific basis for regulation.”

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Specifically, the letter accused the company of paying a toxicologist to provide misleading testimony at a public hearing in Multnomah County over gas stoves' risk on public health.

In addition to the letter, environmental organization Beyond Toxics held a virtual press conference on Tuesday morning to further push the Oregon Department of Justice to investigate NW Natural.

During the meeting, Beyond Toxics shared the results of its [study](#) on gas stoves' impact on air pollution. Researchers found that all 17 homes in the study saw an increase in volatile organic compounds after residents cooked on a gas stove.

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Researchers also determined that 88% of homes saw an increase in nitrogen dioxide connected with asthma symptoms among children.

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Oregon Rep. Khanh Pham and Mark Gamba spoke at the news conference and joined the letter to AG Rosenblum. The representatives said the gas industry should be held accountable for its 'misleading rhetoric' that markets [natural gas as clean energy](#).



electrification efforts.

“We all know that global warming is an existential crisis for our planet and it is also clearly an existential crisis for business as usual in the natural gas industry, but I believe we are at a tipping point — and gas companies know this,” Vinis said.

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The mayor also alleged that gas companies are aware that [2023 is set to be the hottest year](#) on record, and that plenty of scientific research confirms the dangers of cooking with gas.

In a statement to KOIN 6, NW Natural asserted the authors of the letter to Rosenblum “have previously characterized claims as facts.”

Read the gas company’s statement below.

We’d like to point out the authors of this document provided to us have previously characterized claims as facts, often citing themselves as sources or using citations from news articles that also include quotes with unsubstantiated claims or opinions

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Peer reviewed health studies conclude cooking produces pollutants, whether cooking with gas or electricity, and should be done with proper ventilation, which is a reason kitchen exhausts are required for all new homes in Oregon regardless of fuel type.

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Many factors can contribute to indoor air quality, such as building materials, cleaning products as well as the food you cook and how you cook it. Studies that use inappropriate methodologies or deliberately create conditions that aren't representative of how people cook are not useful. For example, studies that don't properly adjust for factors including tobacco smoke, proximity to vehicle exhaust, length of cooking time without ventilation, use of discontinued stoves, family history, and other home environment pollutants should not be used to support an electrification agenda.

A proper and unbiased examination of indoor air quality and cooking with gas and electric stoves involves qualified experts in the relevant related fields.

