

The Boston Globe

“The Argument”

April 19, 2020

**“Should Massachusetts cities and towns ban new natural gas hook-ups?”**

**NO**

**by Thomas M. Kiley**

*President and CEO of the Northeast Gas Association based in Needham; resident of MetroWest*

As a highly affordable and reliable source of energy and one of the leading contributors to New England’s recent carbon emissions reductions, natural gas remains the preferred choice for heating and powering Massachusetts homes and businesses. At a time of economic uncertainty, it is an economical and stable option that helps keep energy bills low. For these reasons, we say “No” to any local bans on new gas hook-ups.

We all share the goal of a clean energy future that addresses climate change. But banning natural gas in new or substantially renovated buildings will not help us achieve those critical goals. The transition to clean energy is underway, but it requires a balanced approach. Reducing vehicle traffic, for instance, can have an unprecedented impact on emission reductions; and ongoing state efforts to address the transportation sector make sense.

**Thomas M. Kiley**

*President and CEO of the Northeast Gas Association based in Needham; resident of MetroWest*

As a highly affordable and reliable source of energy and one of the leading contributors to New England’s recent carbon emissions reductions, natural gas remains the preferred choice for heating and powering Massachusetts homes and businesses. At a time of economic uncertainty, it is an economical and stable option that helps keep energy bills low. For these reasons, we say “No” to any local bans on new gas hook-ups.



Thomas M. Kiley B. AYER

Meanwhile, natural gas is playing an important role in the energy transition and can continue to help. Our member utilities are working with their communities to reduce carbon, including investing in energy efficiency, infrastructure, and clean, innovative technologies. While our state accounts for less than 3 percent of U.S. natural gas deliveries, we invest 18 percent of the nation's total gas efficiency program dollars. And despite strong customer growth, natural gas has reduced Massachusetts emissions by 68 percent in 25 years while playing a key part in the state's improving clean air position by replacing dirtier fuels.

One of the issues with abruptly banning natural gas and going "all electric" for heating and cooking at homes and businesses is that the electricity people would be using would most likely come from the very fuel some seek to ban. While traditional base load plants like nuclear, coal, and oil have retired, three new power plants have come online in Massachusetts since 2018 – powered by natural gas. New offshore wind and electric transmission projects are in development, but are not here yet.

Natural gas is the backbone of New England's energy system, today and for years ahead, in balance with renewables. From empowering the future use of renewables to providing stable, affordable energy prices, natural gas helps support the clean energy future we all want.