

HOUSING FOR ALL



CALIFORNIA BUILDING INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (CBIA)

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Report: Gas Stoves Not a Major Factor in Indoor Air Quality

Comprehensive literature review shows mismatch between recent media reports suggesting a link between natural gas cooking and respiratory illnesses, and what the studies actually say; large body of research does not support the respiratory illness narrative.

Cooking with natural gas is safe and is “not a significant determinant of residential indoor air quality,” according to a new comprehensive literature review. The analysis also shows the type of food is the more important determinant of emissions, rather than the fuel used to cook it, revealing a deep mismatch in the studies being used to inform public policy decisions on natural gas cooking and the actual evidence behind those claims.

The new analysis, “The Effects of Cooking on Residential Indoor Air Quality: A Critical Review of the Literature with an Emphasis on the Use of Natural Gas Appliances,” is an in-depth review of dozens of peer-reviewed studies and government assessments, many of which are being inappropriately used in California and throughout the country as evidence that natural gas cooking is linked to respiratory health risks. As the analysis shows, many of these studies actually demonstrate that proper ventilation during gas or electric cooking is an effective way to ensure safety. The report, conducted by researchers at Catalyst Environmental Solutions and commissioned by the California Restaurant Association and the California Building Industry Association, comes as the state and individual cities are using health claims to propose restrictions on natural gas stoves, ovens, and other appliances, a move that would have significant economic impact on consumers and businesses throughout California.

“California’s world-class restaurants rely on gas cooking to prepare meals inspired by cuisines from around the world,” said **Jot Condie, President and CEO of the California Restaurant Association**. “We have expressed concern that misleading health claims about flame cooking could inform bad policies and harm California restaurants. Regulatory decisions need to be based on sound science, and this analysis shows – by reviewing decades of research – that natural gas cooking is safe and there is no credible evidence to support health claims against this essential element of California’s restaurant industry.”

“Increasing access to home ownership opportunities for all Californians requires sensible policies that balance concern for the environment with the cost as well as consumer choice,” said **Dan Dunmoyer**,

President and CEO of the California Building Industry Association. "Natural gas appliances continue to be the top choice among home buyers, yet restrictions on natural gas access proposed by California municipalities are removing that choice. The science shows natural gas appliances pose no credible health risk with the required ventilation, and prohibiting these popular features in a home will only raise the cost of homeownership and put greater strain on an increasingly fragile electric grid."

"Our review finds that the type of appliance used to cook food indoors – natural gas or electric – is not a significant determinant of indoor air quality," said **Dr. Dan Tormey, president of Catalyst Environmental Solutions and chief author of the report.** "While recent media reports have suggested studies are increasingly showing a link between gas cooking and respiratory illnesses, our review of those and other studies does not support that narrative. We find the body of research on cooking and indoor air quality points toward the value of proper ventilation, regardless of whether an electric or gas stove is used."

Key findings from the report include:

- The type of appliance – natural gas or electric – used to cook food indoors is **not a significant determinant of residential indoor air quality.**
- Indoor air quality is impacted **far more by the act of cooking than the fuel you use to cook it**, and the most effective method to protect health is to provide proper ventilation during cooking.
- Many **additional factors influence the nature and extent of emissions** during cooking, including the type of food, the oils used in cooking, cooking temperatures and time, and proper ventilation.
- Reports linking gas cooking to negative health outcomes often rely on analyses that **do not make that connection.**
- The International Study of Asthma and Allergies in Childhood (ISAAC), historically the largest collaborative worldwide epidemiologic project focused on the possible association between gas stove use and asthma ever undertaken, found in their 2013 Phase 3 Report that for a cohort of 512,707 primary and secondary school children from 47 countries there was **"no evidence of an association between the use of gas as a cooking fuel and either asthma symptoms or asthma diagnosis."**
- There is often a **mismatch between study results and media coverage.**
 - For example: A recent headline-generating report on childhood asthma is based on a flawed study that shows no statistically significant relationship between gas stove use and asthma in North America and does not evaluate other factors such as use of ventilation or exposure to other pollutants released during cooking.

The full report can be found [here](#).

About the California Building Industry Association

The [California Building Industry Association](#) is a statewide trade association based in Sacramento representing thousands of member companies including homebuilders, trade contractors, architects, engineers, designers, suppliers and industry professionals in the homebuilding, multi-family and mixed-use development markets. CBIA members build nearly 9 out of 10 new housing units built in California, including charity homes, legally defined as affordable housing, middle-class market-rate housing and luxury homes.

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