



April 3, 2022

Sebastopol City Council
7120 Bodega Avenue P.O. Box 1776
Sebastopol, CA 95473

Subject: City Council Agenda Item 17. Public hearing – First Reading and Introduction of Ordinance to revise the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit new Gas Stations in Sebastopol

Dear Mayor Slayter and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the hundreds of individuals and about two dozen local Sonoma County organizations who support our mission, we are writing to express our full support for the measure before you on April 5 to enact a prohibition of the construction of new gasoline stations within Sebastopol city limits and to prohibit the expansion of fueling infrastructure at existing stations. This measure has been reviewed by Sebastopol's Climate Action Committee and the Planning Commission and in its current form has received unanimous support.

This measure is not symbolic. There are at least four active new gasoline station proposals in Sonoma County and it is possible that one might be proposed within Sebastopol city limits. Sebastopol is served by about seven gas stations within or near city limits, so although there is no need for more stations, this has not stopped development of new gas stations in other cities where there is an abundance of stations.


The City of Sebastopol formally recognized the urgent nature of the climate crisis and its connection to fossil fuels when it adopted its Climate Emergency Resolution on December 3, 2019 (Resolution 6274). The measure before you is a logical step pursuant to that resolution. The amendments to the city's land use code are an important part of revising obsolete 20th century local government codes that are still on the books throughout the U.S and that continue to allow fossil fuel infrastructure, in this case gas stations, to be built. As only the fourth city in the United States taking this action, Sebastopol is demonstrating significant leadership.

Given that you have discretionary authority to amend the draft ordinance, our only caution is to urge you to avoid adding any complexity to the measure by imposing new restrictions or requirements on *existing* gas stations, other than to prohibit the expansion of fossil fueling infrastructure at existing gas stations. Trying to link the prohibition to other proactive measures such as electric vehicle charging,

public transit improvements, or active mobility amenities is not necessary and risks delaying action. Those measures are important and necessary, but can and should occur independently of this measure to cease the permitting process for gasoline stations.

Again, we enthusiastically encourage your “yes” vote on this matter. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Woody Hastings and Jenny Blaker. The signature on the left is a stylized cursive signature, and the signature on the right is a more legible cursive signature.

Woody Hastings & Jenny Blaker
Co-coordinators, Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS)
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