



Santa Rosa City Council
City Hall, 100 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

To: Santa Rosa City Council
From: The Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations
Date: August 22, 2022

Subject: Agenda Item 15.2 Public Hearing - Zoning Code Text Amendments to Prohibit New Gas Station Land Uses and Prohibit Expansion of Fossil Fuel Infrastructure for Existing Gas Stations

Dear Mayor Rogers and Councilmembers:

It has been a pleasure to work with the Climate Action Subcommittee, the Planning Commission, city staff, and members of the Santa Rosa community since early 2020 to bring this issue forward for a vote. The Coalition Opposing New Gas Stations (CONGAS) is pleased to offer its enthusiastic support for the Ordinance and zoning code text amendments outlined in the staff report to prohibit new gas station land uses and expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure for existing gas station land uses in the City of Santa Rosa. We urge your “aye” vote.

CONGAS, founded in 2019, is a Sonoma County community-based not-for-profit organization with a mission to halt the permitting and construction of new gas stations. In January 2020 the City of Santa Rosa adopted a [Climate Emergency Declaration](#) that included a “*call for a just transition away from fossil fuels.*” This action before you is in alignment with the 2020 Declaration.

There are multiple reasons to support a prohibition on new gas stations:

- This is not a symbolic act. There are two active gas station proposals in Santa Rosa and nothing on the books to stop more permit applications from being submitted;
- Although the proposed ordinance will not affect the two completed permit applications, the fact that there are two in the city shows that the prohibition is needed;
- In both pending cases there are at least ten operating gas stations within a five-mile radius;
- There are already over 40 operating gas stations within Santa Rosa’s city limits, as well as others nearby, with no demonstrable need for more;
- As pointed out in the staff report and Ordinance, this action would be consistent with Santa Rosa’s own climate policies as well as those of the Regional Climate Protection Authority and the State of California in response to the climate crisis;



- This is an environmental justice issue, as pointed out by city staff in the local siting of gas stations, and given that every drop of gasoline leaves behind it a wake of destruction – from the drilling to the pumping to the transportation by rail, trucks, and pipelines to processing facilities and refineries – almost always disproportionately impacting indigenous, low income, and communities of color;
- Inevitable leaks and spills pollute surface and groundwater, and soils, impacting human health and wildlife habitats. Sonoma County is riddled with [leaking underground storage tanks](#).

CONGAS enthusiastically supports efforts to improve walking, biking, public transit and infrastructure to support electric vehicle charging at places where people live, work, and spend time such as at shopping centers, cinemas, public buildings, and so on. However, we encourage the City Council to resist the urge to include any of these kinds of good proactive measures that can more appropriately be addressed in other arenas.

We support the recommendation of the Planning Commission and the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council adopt this ordinance approving text amendments to Title 20 of the City Code to prohibit new gas station land uses and to prohibit expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure for existing gas station land uses.

We appreciate the time and effort staff has invested in this matter and we look forward to working collaboratively to achieve our shared objectives – an equity-centered, safe, clean-emission, climate smart future for the City of Santa Rosa. We respectfully request your vote in favor of this measure.

Sincerely,

Jenny Blaker, Co-coordinator, CONGAS
Woody Hastings, Co-coordinator, CONGAS