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**APGA Disappointed in Berkeley Ban of Natural Gas**

*Washington, D.C. (July 19, 2019)* – In response to the action taken earlier this week by the Berkeley City Council to ban the use of natural gas in new low-rise residential buildings beginning in 2020, APGA’s President & CEO, Bert Kalisch, issued the following statement:

“I am saddened and disappointed to learn of the action taken by the Berkeley City Council to ban the use of natural gas in new residential buildings beginning in 2020. Unfortunately, across the country, there is a growing effort to influence policymakers by groups who think the only way to ensure a healthy and clean environment is to eliminate natural gas. The fact is, they are wrong and more local governments should stand up and speak out against these irresponsible policies that would do little for the environment and lead to irreparable harm for consumers.

There is no debate that solar and wind technologies will help efforts to make the energy we all use cleaner. However, the very nature of these intermittent resources requires that we continue to invest in clean and readily available energy that keeps the lights on when the sun isn’t shining, or the wind isn’t blowing.

This “all eggs in one basket” approach is short-sighted. The fact is, natural gas use in homes is three times as efficient as electricity, represents the lowest cost option, and its use in residential and commercial applications is among the smallest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 175 million Americans use natural gas in their home or business. At a time when families and businesses in states across the nation are finding it harder to make ends meet and home prices are skyrocketing, policymakers should be focused on energy policies that every family can afford.

Households that use all-electric appliances pay almost $900 a year more than those that have the traditional mix of natural gas and electric homes, according to the American Gas Association. How is that a fair solution for families struggling to pay rent and put food on the table, or for senior citizens on fixed incomes?

APGA members know these families. APGA represents more than 700 local, municipally owned natural gas systems in 37 states. The people who count on natural gas for affordable heat, hot water, and cooking live in the communities we serve. Our neighbors shouldn’t have to choose between food, medicine, childcare, and their energy costs.

Smart energy policies should include ways to reduce energy consumption by utilizing current energy infrastructure in the most efficient way and planning for our energy future in a way that protects consumer options. This would balance their energy needs and ultimately ensures our energy infrastructure is secure and economically viable for future generations. We all want the best environment possible, and APGA believes there is a better way to achieve that without sacrificing consumer choice.”

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*APGA is the national association of municipally and publicly-owned local distribution systems. There are about 1,000 public gas systems serving more than 6 million customers. These public gas utilities are not-for-profit retail distribution entities that are owned by, and accountable to, the citizens they serve. They include municipal gas distribution systems, public utility districts, county districts, and other public agencies that have natural gas distribution facilities.*