

Environment & Energy

Washington State to Require Heat Pumps in New Building Codes

By Zach Bright

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Washington state's Building Code Council has approved a code that sets stricter electrification requirements for new commercial buildings to reduce greenhouse gases.

The updated energy code, adopted in an 11-3 vote on April 22, will require heat pumps to be used as the primary heat source in new commercial buildings and multifamily residences of four or more stories.

Effective July 2023, the code is projected to cut more than 8 million tons of carbon dioxide by 2050, according to an analysis by the Rocky Mountain Institute, a clean energy research organization. About one-quarter of Washington's greenhouse gas emissions come from buildings, according to a report from Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's (D) office.

1. Washington's commercial code update adds to changes made in more than 70 jurisdictions across nine states that have adopted building electrification policies since 2019.
2. Gas appliances emit greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change and particulate matter (PM2.5) that can lead to early death, the report from RMI said.
3. Denver also began a program on April 22 that offers up to \$9,000 in rebates for homes installing electric heat pumps. Last December, New York City became the largest municipality to require new buildings to use heat pumps and induction stoves.
4. California approved last year statewide electrification codes and incentives for installing heat pumps in newly built homes and apartments.

To contact the reporter on this story: Zach Bright at zbright@bloombergindustry.com

To contact the editors responsible for this story: Renee Schoof at rschoof@bloombergindustry.com; Zachary Sherwood at zsherwood@bloombergindustry.com

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