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To: City of Ann Arbor Planning Commission
From: Tim Langholz, Assistant State Director, Michigan
Date: February 14, 2023
RE: Oppose Ordinances Restricting Natural Gas Appliances

On behalf of NFIB members in Ann Arbor and across Michigan, we would ask that you oppose and reject any ordinances that would restrict the use or installation of natural gas appliances within the city limits.

While NFIB understands the interest in creating a carbon-neutral environment, doing so on the backs of small businesses by heavy-handed government mandates is not the way to do it.

NFIB sets its policies by balloting its members on issues affecting small business. In January of 2022, NFIB members in Michigan were asked **“Should government entities such as states, cities, or counties, adopt ordinances which ban the use of types or sources of energy?” Small business responded NO by an overwhelming 95%.** Those responding yes were 1.5% and 3.5% were undecided.

Small businesses are still recovering from the shutdowns that began in 2020 and lasted on and off for years. Adding on further mandates, which would increase costs immediately, could be the last straw for some businesses. Natural gas is an affordable method for cooking and heating used by almost 76% of U.S. restaurants, many of which are independently owned and operated in the Ann Arbor area. Mandating the use of electric appliances and cook surfaces would be an immediate cost increase of approximately four and a half times the cost of natural gas, not to mention the cost of switching appliances.

Small businesses also depend on energy reliability. This policy does not seem to take into consideration the strain on our already stressed electrical grid. Decisions on this issue made in Ann Arbor could have consequences for many Michiganders, including small business owners, throughout the state.

On behalf of small business owners in Ann Arbor and throughout Michigan, please oppose these restrictions to gas appliances.