

Senate Bill 7 Banning Gas Stoves

Article 1

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2023/05/30/gas-stove-ban-controversy-explained/70253219007/>

Is the government coming for your gas stove? Here's how the controversy first got cooking



Nick Penzenstadler

USA TODAY

Is the government coming for your gas stove? Not anytime soon, but that perceived threat set off a political firestorm earlier this year, and newly released emails show the government scrambling to contain the outrage.

The independent, and usually sleepy, Consumer Product Safety Commission went into overdrive in January after news reports featured an interview with Commissioner Rich Trumka Jr., who floated a future ban on the stoves, which can cause indoor air pollution and contribute to climate change.

USA TODAY joined other news outlets in filing Freedom of Information Act requests tracking the internal fallout and this month received 584-pages of heavily redacted emails that show nearly a dozen staff members caught off guard by the mounting blowback.

“This could become a thing,” a CPSC legislative affairs aide quipped in a Jan. 10 email.

How did the gas stove controversy start?

It's not news that gas stoves can cause health hazards inside our homes. Researchers have pointed it out for decades. But a study released in December linked using a gas stove to an increased risk of childhood asthma, touching off a new round of concern.

On Dec. 14, Trumka appeared on a webinar sponsored by the United States Public Interest Research Group and talked about gas stoves, saying the CPSC should consider regulating emissions or banning them entirely. “I think we ought to keep that possibility of a ban in mind ... because it's a powerful tool in our toolbox. It's a real possibility.”

That drew minimal news coverage at first in a 543-word story from Chicago Tribune with the headline “Gas stoves could be banned in 2023, top federal official says.”

On Dec. 21, Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Rep. Don Beyer of Virginia, both Democrats, urged the CPSC to take some action, citing the nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide emitted by gas stoves.

The possibility of a ban didn’t go viral until a climate-focused public relations shop underscored its significance and a Bloomberg reporter took note. He reinterviewed Trumka, who again floated the idea of a ban in a story that ran Jan. 9.

Firebrand Republicans jumped on the issue, which seemed to strike a nerve in America. The agency's hotline was overwhelmed and electronic letters flowed in. Commenters compared the stove regulation to pandemic lockdowns and warned Trumka and the CPSC against becoming “the next Dr. Fauci.”

Texas Republican Rep. Ronny Jackson tweeted the following day: “I’ll NEVER give up my gas stove. If the maniacs in the White House come for my stove, they can pry it from my cold dead hands. COME AND TAKE IT!!”

His missive quickly made the rounds at the top ranks of the CPSC, along with newly minted memes from Sen. Ted Cruz’s staff. One replaced the iconic cannon in the Texas Revolution battle flag with a gas stove.

CPSC Director of Communications Pamela Rucker Springs forwarded a Wall Street Journal editorial headlined “Biden Is Coming for Your Gas Stove” to commission Chairman Alexander Hoehn-Saric and others, saying in her email: “Not surprising coming from News Corp which is pushing this story hard across their assets. Multiple queries from Fox assets.”

In another email, Springs warned her staff: “This is going to be ALL HANDS ON DECK for the foreseeable future.”

Trumka and Hoehn-Saric worked with the communications staff to tamp down the growing backlash, their email conversations at times starting early mornings and continuing late into the night.

By then, Trumka had walked back his own words in a tweet and Hoehn-Saric was preparing a widely circulated statement: “I am not looking to ban gas stoves and the CPSC has no proceeding

to do so.” A tweet from Beyer emphasizing that he had not called for a ban but rather increased regulations, including range hoods, drew an approving email response from Springs: “Yay!”

But CPSC staff shared the Republican-led “Stop Trying to Obsessively Vilify Energy Act,” or STOVE Act, with colleagues on Jan. 11, just two days after Bloomberg’s story, noting, “The House Rs move fast.”

By the end of the week, CPSC internal documents log dozens of news inquiries and millions of mentions of the agency in media reports.

Are gas stoves banned in New York and Berkeley?

No and no.

Technically, New York passed legislation this year that bans gas stoves and furnaces from most new buildings starting in 2029. It exempts hospitals and restaurants and doesn’t affect existing buildings.

Berkeley, California, became the first U.S. city to adopt a ban in 2019 on natural gas in new homes and buildings, igniting a protest from the restaurant lobby. In April, a federal appeals court struck down the ban.

What happens next for gas stoves?

The CPSC is sifting through the more than 9,000 comments it has received from the public about the impact of gas stoves and possible regulation.

The comment period closed May 8 and responses are filled with a mix of bombastic and often vulgar notes. In all, 55 comments mentioned “freedom” and more than 20 cited “liberty.”

Sage Canchola-Welch, principal at Sunstone Strategies – the communications firm that helped set off the controversy by circulating the Trumka webinar in December – said the issue has unfortunately become politicized.

“When the smoke clears, this will be a pivotal moment to create public awareness on this issue,” Canchola-Welch said, pointing out that some of the loudest criticism came from Republican districts that largely don’t rely on natural gas for stoves.

She predicted that the CPSC may suggest stronger labeling on stoves that warn of the chemical dangers.

Last week, Congress held a hearing filled with mockery and wry humor about the controversy.

Rep. Jared Moskowitz, D-Fla., and other Democrats offered biting commentary about what he called the “Grand Appliance Party” defending the rights of stove owners.

“I look forward to the legislation of our time, the Appliance Bill of Rights that might come,” Moskowitz said at the hearing. “Congress can still do big things. We have not lost our way, and when the American people need leadership ... we are going to deliver for them and their gas stoves.”

Republican Pat Fallon of Texas called any new emissions regulation a “de facto ban” that takes away freedom from Americans.

“This is about taking away choice, and every time you take away choice you take away liberty.”

Nick Penzenstadler is a reporter on the USA TODAY investigations team. Contact him at npenz@usatoday.com or [@npenzenstadler](https://twitter.com/npenzenstadler), or on Signal at (720) 507-5273.

Article 2

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/should-the-us-ban-gas-stoves-180981417/>

Should the U.S. Ban Gas Stoves?

While the White House opposes an all-out ban, a federal safety agency is studying the health and environmental hazards of the kitchen appliances

Sarah Kuta
Daily Correspondent
January 11, 2023

The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is grappling with how to address gas stoves. These common kitchen appliances can pose a risk to human health by emitting air pollutants indoors. The federal agency, which aims to reduce injuries and deaths linked to consumer products, will consider a ban on new gas stoves along with other, less drastic measures, such as implementing emissions standards, reports Bloomberg’s Ari Natter.

Amid mounting public health and environmental concerns about the appliances, one of the agency’s commissioners, Richard Trumka Jr., tells Bloomberg that “any option is on the table.”

“This is a hidden hazard,” he tells the publication. “Products that can’t be made safe can be banned.”

In response to these comments, the CPSC and the Biden administration faced an almost immediate backlash from the oil and gas industry and its political allies. Now, the head of the safety commission is walking back these statements. “I am not looking to ban gas stoves,” Alexander Hoehn-Saric, the commission chair, said in a statement on Wednesday. “And the CPSC has no proceeding to do so.”

But the agency is seeking information on the subject: This spring, it will put out a public request for details on the possible problems and solutions related to gas stoves. Deciding whether and how to regulate consumer products typically takes a

long time, but at a virtual webinar in December, Trumka said public pressure could help speed the process, potentially spurring regulations by the end of 2023, per the Hill's Rachel Frazin. Lawmakers have also asked the CPSC to address the issues posed by gas stoves.

Roughly 40 percent of homes in the U.S. have gas stoves, powered by some sort of combustible fuel—most commonly, natural gas.

But scientists have found the appliances can leak unsafe levels of pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, methane and small particulates into the air. An October study published in the journal *Environmental Science & Technology* found that gas stoves in California were emitting several harmful chemicals, even while turned off. The nonprofit Consumer Reports also found high levels of nitrogen oxide emissions in its testing and urged shoppers to consider buying electric ranges instead.

Those indoor emissions may contribute to an array of health issues, including leukemia, cardiovascular issues and respiratory illnesses. A new study published in December in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* suggests that 12.7 percent of childhood asthma cases in the U.S. can be linked with gas stoves, which is similar to the asthma-related risks posed by other factors, such as secondhand smoke.

In addition to the public health concerns, gas stoves also emit heat-trapping gases that contribute to global warming—most notably, methane, which is 25 times more efficient at trapping radiation than carbon dioxide is, per the Environmental Protection Agency. As such, some municipalities and counties are enacting rules to limit gas-powered appliances, such as stoves, furnaces and water heaters. The federal government included rebates for electric cooktops in the Inflation Reduction Act to encourage consumers to get rid of their gas stoves.

Meanwhile, natural gas and home appliance industry groups say moving away from natural gas is a mistake—one that could prove costly to consumers. In a recent blog post, the American Gas Association wrote that banning natural gas could lead to increased heating and overall housing costs.

“Pushing unpopular policies that risk dramatically increasing the cost of living isn't just irresponsible, it's outright malpractice, and the harm could be felt by millions,” wrote the trade organization.

The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers argues that banning gas stoves would fail to address indoor air pollution from cooking, “because all forms of cooking, regardless of heat source, generate air pollutants, especially at high temperatures,” says Jill Notini, the association's spokeswoman, in a statement, as reported by CNN Business' Ramishah Maruf.

For the time being, no changes regarding the legality of gas stoves are happening at the federal level. “The President does not support banning gas stoves,” Michael Kikukawa, a spokesperson for the White House, tells the *New York Times*' Elena Shao and Lisa Friedman. “And the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which is independent, is not banning gas stoves.”