



To Whom It May Concern,

The undersigned organizations strongly discourage teachers and other educational professionals from attending the “Clean Energy Teacher Training: Exploring Renewable Gas” event hosted by Oregon’s largest fossil fuel corporation NW Natural this Saturday, January 21. This event is a thinly veiled attempt by NW Natural to turn educators into vehicles for propaganda targeted toward school children.

Why It’s Important to Boycott:

NW Natural, a fossil gas utility working in Oregon and Washington, is spending billions of dollars to convince lawmakers and the public that “renewable natural gas,” or biomethane, and other polluting fuels are viable climate-friendly alternatives to fossil gas used in homes and buildings. They are presenting themselves as part of the climate solution, while fighting against common sense climate policy in the state. In reality, renewable natural gas is chemically indistinguishable from fossil gas, as both are primarily methane: a climate and air pollutant with grave impacts to the health and safety of our climate and communities.

While local [leaders across the country](#) are increasingly recognizing that energy-efficient, all-electric buildings are the safest, most cost effective way to reduce emissions, NW Natural and the gas industry at large is fighting tooth and nail against the clean energy transition. And now it’s clear that *they’re trying to recruit teachers to further their profit-driven agenda with students*. This “Clean Energy Teacher Training: Exploring Renewable Gas” event is a continuation of the corporation’s track record of [misleading consumers](#) and propagandizing youth with [gas-themed children's books](#). These tactics, and the significant pollution associated with the company, were what motivated [youth climate strikers to name NW Natural one of the four worst “climate villains” in Portland](#).

The fossil fuel industry is trying to make teachers into tools in their campaign of climate denial and greenwashing. We encourage you as educators to learn about the context in which NW Natural is advancing these false solutions and to not attend this event.

Background on NW Natural and Portland Public Schools:

A growing body of research has clearly shown that [biomethane](#), synthetic methane, and [hydrogen blends](#) (>15%) are not economically viable solutions to decarbonizing the gas system and pose significant threats to public health and safety, and the climate. Last year, the [Portland Public School board passed a strong commitment to electrify their buildings](#), and explicitly [rejected NW Natural's false narratives about renewable natural gas](#) and other alternative fuels. NW Natural is now attempting to undermine those decisions by paying teachers to spread industry propaganda in the classroom.

The Truth about Biomethane that NW Natural Doesn't Want You To Know:

- **Health Impacts:** Just like with traditional [natural gas](#), burning biomethane, synthetic methane, and hydrogen in buildings also poses significant impacts to indoor and outdoor air quality and, in turn, public health. Chemically identical to methane gas, biomethane has the same health risks associated with indoor methane combustion, including but not limited to increased instances of asthma in children, exposure to known carcinogens such as benzene, and significant indoor and outdoor Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) pollution. These chemicals have been shown to greatly increase childhood asthma, among other illnesses, with [one study estimating that almost 13% of childhood asthma cases in the United States are due to exposure to gas in homes](#). Hydrogen [emits even more NO_x when burned](#), and presents safety risks from flame flashback. A [recent study](#) showed that using hydrogen in homes would quadruple the risk of explosions.
- **Climate Impacts:** All methane consumption is inherently harmful to our climate, with recent studies showing that impacts are [equivalent to – or even worse than – coal](#). Methane – whether branded as “renewable” or not – is a greenhouse gas approximately 87 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20 year period. And hydrogen, although an important tool to reduce climate pollution from certain industries – is neither a smart nor a safe solution for combustion in buildings.
- **Localized Pollution:** Biomethane is primarily generated through industrial animal agriculture and landfills — both of which have outsized impacts on our environment and on the disproportionately BIPOC and low-income communities that they are sited near. A [study by the California Climate and Agriculture Network](#) shows that increasing demand for biomethane would actually increase local pollution from animal agriculture.

Educators: The fossil fuel industry has been trying to fool elected officials and the public with their clever greenwashing for decades, and now they're trying to get to our kids – through you. We strongly urge you to boycott this event and any future events hosted by NW Natural. We also encourage you to communicate with other educators about industry misinformation. Fossil fuel propaganda has no place in our schools.

Signed,

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