

CITY OF BOZEMAN TESTIMONY
Energy, Technology, and Federal Relations Committee
04-05-2023

Chair Zolnikov and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to clarify the testimony that I submitted on 3-20-2023 in **OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 208** on behalf of the City of Bozeman.

I wish to emphasize that from the city staff perspective, NorthWestern Energy is effectively managing the risk associated with natural gas distribution. NorthWestern Energy currently has extensive pipeline and service line protection monitoring, meter inspections and upgrades, and ongoing leak surveys to ensure the safe delivery of natural gas from its transmission and distribution network ([Gas Pipeline Maintenance and Safety | NorthWestern Energy](#)). They have also identified goals to reduce methane leakage rates to help mitigate climate change. NorthWestern Energy consistently supports safety inspections in the field, and City staff do not foresee a circumstance in which the utility would deny a safety inspection.

This does not diminish our concern that natural gas pipes in buildings are frequently found to leak gas, which is a significant health, safety, and climate change concern ([Home is Where the Pipeline Ends: Characterization of Volatile Organic Compounds Present in Natural Gas at the Point of the Residential End User | Environmental Science & Technology \(acs.org\)](#)). We continue to believe that Senate Bill (SB) 208 is unnecessary and may compromise the ability of local governments to protect public health and safety with respect to in-building gas pipe permits and inspections.

Building gas lines are governed by International Fuel Gas Code (IFGC) with the International Building Code as adopted by the City and State of Montana. These codes grant a jurisdiction the authority to permit and inspect the minimum life safety requirements of fuel gas in buildings. To help avoid future challenges, SB 208 should include language that supports a state-wide culture of health and safety by affirming that permits and inspections authorized within State-adopted building codes do not constitute an impediment to the connection or reconnection of an electric, natural gas, propane, or other energy or utility service.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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