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'Right to natural gas' makes the 2026 ballot

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Colorado voters will be asked in November whether they want to enshrine their right to use natural gas in the state constitution.

Initiative 177, brought forward by the conservative nonprofit Advance Colorado, qualified for the ballot after proponents submitted the required number of signatures, according to the secretary of state's office.

The "right to natural gas" initiative will be on the Nov. 3 general election ballot. Proponents needed to gather enough signatures from each state senate district to equal 2% of the total registered voters in those districts because the ballot initiative would change the Colorado Constitution. It also needed to meet the 124,238-signature threshold, the secretary of state's office said Thursday in a news release. *Note*

In May, Democrats floated a bill that would establish guardrails for Initiative 177, anticipating that it would make the ballot and win approval from voters. But House leaders scuttled the bill at the last minute, saying it would not meaningfully change the impacts of any ballot measure.

Colorado is trying to move away from natural gas as a heating and cooking source in homes as the state tries to reduce its overall greenhouse gas emissions. Denver also has considered outlawing natural gas in homes after implementing new restrictions on its use in commercial buildings. *Note*

Burning natural gas produces nitrogen oxides, which are a key ingredient in ground-level ozone pollution. Those nitrogen oxides combine with volatile organic compounds on hot summer days, and the pollution contributes to climate change and harms human health. *Note*

The nine-county northern Front Range region — Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, Larimer and Weld counties — has been out of compliance with federal ozone standards for 17 years. *Note*

Research also has shown that cooking with a gas stove in a kitchen can release as much benzene as second-hand cigarette smoke. *Note*