

**From:** [Robert Mayo](#)  
**To:** [Public Comment - EC](#)  
**Subject:** public comment for the Environmental Commission meeting  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 1:03:53 PM

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Dear members of the Environmental Commission,

Did you know that the City of Los Altos prohibits the use of a shared-circuit 120 volt heat pump water heater in a shared-circuit configuration? This is a primary tool for electrifying houses with small electrical panels. This prohibition will impact the city's emissions reduction goals.

As you may know, these water heaters are the result of several years of collaboration between NGOs, advocates, and manufacturers, and were specifically designed to enable retrofits of homes with smaller electrical panels. They are designed to be plugged into an existing outlet circuit, eliminating the need for electrical wiring. Or, if a new outlet is required, the wiring is minimal as the outlet can be added to an existing outlet circuit. However, the City of Los Altos building department requires a dedicated circuit and disconnect for these water heaters, effectively prohibiting their use in the intended manner, and neutralizing their benefits.

Because of this, decarbonizing Los Altos houses with small electrical panels is substantially harder than in other cities. Furthermore, for all Los Altos houses, emergency replacement of water heaters when they break is also complicated, as shared-circuit water heaters are a primary means of providing temporary hot water. They are used because they require little to no electrical wiring and can be installed quickly. Requiring a dedicated circuit and disconnect makes their use in an emergency situation difficult. In Los Altos, as long as this requirement remains in place, the best solution for temporary hot water would probably be a gas loaner water heater.

I ask that the city reconsider this decision.

Furthermore, regardless of the outcome of the review, and in the interest of transparency, I ask that the city put their decision and requirements in writing. The building department already provides clear written guidelines for the electrical requirements for kitchen remodels. I would like to request similar written guidelines be provided for heat pump water heaters, for both the shared-circuit types discussed in this email as well as for other types.

Thank you for your consideration,

--Bob  
Robert "Bob" Mayo