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Introduced by Sens. KRUEGER, CLEARE, COONEY, GONZALEZ, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON, KAVANAGH, MAY, PARKER, RIVERA, SALAZAR, SANDERS, SEPULVEDA, SERRANO, STAVISKY, WEBB -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Consumer Protection

AN ACT to amend the general business law, in relation to labeling requirements for gas stoves

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as
2 the "Healthy Homes Right To Know Act".
3 § 2. Legislative findings. The legislature finds and declares that:
4 1. New York has a long history of protecting its citizens by making
5 sure they have adequate knowledge to make informed purchasing decisions.
6 2. The public is broadly unaware of the health dangers posed by gas
7 stoves. On May 8, 2023, ten state attorneys general, including the
8 attorney general of New York State as well as the New York City Corpo-
9 ration Counsel, sent a letter to the Consumer Product Safety Commission
10 (CPSC), in which they asserted, "Most of the research and evidence on
11 the health risks associated with elevated levels of emissions from gas
12 appliances has been circulated among decisionmakers and engaged stake-
13 holders. This has left the public to try to piece together health and
14 safety information--which can be false or misleading--from the internet,
15 social media, and other non-authoritative sources. Thus, when it comes
16 to gas stove emissions, consumers are presently unprotected against, and
17 inadequately informed about, the health hazards these appliances pose."
18 Those dangers may now be particularly acute as, according to the U.S.
19 Environmental Protection Agency, "Americans on average, spend approxi-
20 mately 90% of their time indoors where concentrations of some pollutants
21 are often 2 to 5 times higher than typical outdoor concentrations."

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 3. The same letter suggests, "requiring warning labels on gas stoves
2 that provide more information on their health risks". The letter goes on
3 to say, "Proper labeling on gas stoves would represent an important step
4 in helping to educate consumers about the health risks associated with
5 gas stoves. Providing this information upfront is essential to enabling
6 consumers to make a fully informed decision."

7 4. Current New York state regulations regarding unvented gas appli-
8 ances are inconsistent. Since there is no statewide requirement that gas
9 stoves be ventilated to the outdoors, a precautionary approach to public
10 safety requires that these appliances be treated as unvented.

11 5. Although the research regarding the impacts of unvented gas heaters
12 is vastly less robust than that regarding gas stoves, the New York State
13 Department of Health nonetheless adopted regulations in January of 2023
14 to require labeling of unvented gas heaters including, "WARNING: This
15 appliance produces CARBON MONOXIDE, a poisonous gas. You MUST use carbon
16 monoxide alarms to avoid injury or death". Labeling requirements for
17 unvented heaters in California also include warnings of exposure to:
18 "...chemicals including benzene, which is known to the state of Califor-
19 nia to cause cancer and cause birth defects or other reproductive harm".

20 6. Given that the research regarding gas stoves is even more complete
21 and compelling, New York State should also act to inform the public as
22 has already been done with unvented gas heaters.

23 7. The scientific consensus on gas stove emissions is robust and grow-
24 ing. It is now understood that gas stoves can emit carbon monoxide
25 (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), benzene, and formaldehyde. Methane emis-
26 sions can occur even when the gas stove is turned off. According to the
27 Concerned Health Professionals of New York and the Physicians for Social
28 Responsibility, "Nearly three-quarters of methane emissions from gas
29 stoves take place while the stove is turned off and not in use. At the
30 same time levels of hazardous air pollutants from everyday use of gas
31 stoves often exceed the limits of outdoor air quality standards. Indoor
32 concentrations are often much higher than health-protective guidelines
33 set by the World Health Organization."

34 8. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
35 "Carbon monoxide, or "CO," is an odorless, colorless gas that can kill
36 you". The New York State Department of Health refers to carbon monoxide
37 as a poisonous gas. Approximately 430 people die each year from carbon
38 monoxide exposure. Thousands more become ill and seek medical attention.
39 Carbon monoxide poisoning is estimated to cause more than 50,000 emer-
40 gency room visits in the United States each year. According to the New
41 York State Department of Health, annually, "In New York State, about 200
42 people are hospitalized and over 1800 people visit an emergency depart-
43 ment because of accidental CO poisoning." The numbers of accidental
44 poisonings are on the rise. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
45 "found evidence of a statistically significant upward trend in non-fire
46 CO deaths for the 11-year period from 2009 to 2019". According to
47 Preventative Medicine reports, "Accidental, non-fire related poisoning
48 accounts for over \$1.3 billion annually in societal costs."

49 9. Notably, while carbon monoxide alarms are an important preventative
50 measure to lower the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, they are not
51 guaranteed to be effective. According to the National Carbon Monoxide
52 Awareness Association: "Only 14% of families in the US have a properly
53 functioning carbon monoxide alarm". An earlier report showed that in
54 2009, 83% of NYC residents reported having CO alarms. However, only 54%
55 of them had recently tested or replaced their batteries.

1 10. Nitrogen dioxide, or NO₂, is a gaseous air pollutant composed of
2 nitrogen and oxygen and is formed when fossil fuels are burned. The EPA
3 has determined that NO₂ is "causal" of more severe respiratory symptoms
4 in people with asthma and that long-term exposure to NO₂ is "likely
5 causal" of respiratory illnesses such as asthma. The New England Journal
6 of Medicine has found that, "Gas combustion in stoves, boilers and
7 furnaces generates oxides of nitrogen," to which the article attributes,
8 "Increased asthma risk; exacerbation of COPD and cardiovascular
9 disease". The EPA includes NO₂ on its list of asthma triggers, and
10 "unvented combustion appliances, e.g. gas stoves" is first on its list
11 of "primary sources of NO₂ indoors".

12 11. Each year, asthma accounts for more than 439,000 hospitalizations,
13 1.6 million emergency department visits, and 10.5 million physician
14 office visits in the United States. About 10 people die from the disease
15 every day. Asthma has been linked to 13.8 million missed school days and
16 14.2 million missed workdays annually. The cost of treating asthma in
17 the United States is \$62.8 billion every year.

18 12. A 2013 meta-analysis of 41 studies found that children living in
19 homes with gas stoves had a 42 percent higher risk of experiencing asth-
20 ma symptoms, and, over their lifetime, a 24 percent increase in the risk
21 of being diagnosed with asthma, and a 2022 peer-reviewed research paper
22 published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and
23 Public Health found that more than 12% of current childhood asthma cases
24 in the US can be attributed to gas stove use. The same paper suggests
25 that attribution number is 18.8% of children with asthma in New York
26 State.

27 13. The asthma crisis does not equally affect all New York communi-
28 ties. Black Americans are approximately two times more likely to die of
29 asthma than White Americans. Further, the percentage of Black children
30 in the U.S. suffering from asthma is nearly twice that of White chil-
31 dren, and their death rate is ten times higher. According to a 2023
32 joint report from the New York State Department of Health and the New
33 York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, "The burden of asthma
34 falls disproportionately among specific demographic groups, specifically
35 for persons and communities of color, where asthma prevalence is higher
36 among Black, American Indian, and multiracial New Yorkers." The Centers
37 for Disease Control and Prevention concurs with the assessment of
38 disproportionate burden.

39 14. While the age-adjusted asthma mortality rate for New York City is
40 higher than for New York State as a whole, with the Bronx demonstrating
41 a notably higher mortality rate than the other boroughs, this problem
42 should not be construed as a New York City issue. Other hotspots exist
43 around the state. For example, years of academic research has convinc-
44 ingly demonstrated alarmingly high rates of asthma on Buffalo's West
45 Side. A study by Dr. Lwebuga-Mukasa, Professor of Medicine at the
46 University of Buffalo, found that "nearly 45% of West Side households
47 reported at least one case of chronic respiratory illness or asthma".

48 15. Gas and propane combustion from gas stoves emits benzene. A study
49 from the Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment found that a
50 single gas cooktop burner set on high, or an oven set at 350 degrees
51 Fahrenheit can, "raise indoor levels of the carcinogen benzene above
52 those of secondhand smoke". According to the World Health Organization,
53 "Human exposure to benzene has been associated with a range of acute and
54 long-term adverse health effects and diseases, including cancer and
55 haematological effects."

1 16. Formaldehyde is listed as a human carcinogen and has been found at
2 more elevated levels associated with gas burners set to "simmer".

3 17. Ventilation of gas stove emissions to the outdoors can improve
4 indoor air quality. However, many homeowners do not have ventilation,
5 and it is not required by state law. In addition, studies also show that
6 many people who have ventilation systems don't use them, often because
7 of noise concerns. Vents can become blocked with debris and the effec-
8 tiveness of ventilation systems can be compromised by changes in air
9 pressure in the building envelope caused by the opening of windows or
10 doors or the activation of bathroom fans, for example. Lastly, some
11 people with range hoods may be under the mistaken belief that pollutants
12 are being vented outdoors when in fact many hoods simply recirculate the
13 air into the kitchen after filtering it. The effectiveness of filtration
14 varies widely and is partially based on active maintenance of the
15 filtration system.

16 18. Therefore it is the intent of the legislature to promote public
17 health, support informed consumer choice, and create consistent public
18 policy, by requiring labeling and signage regarding the health impacts
19 of gas stoves.

20 § 3. The general business law is amended by adding a new section 322-d
21 to read as follows:

22 § 322-d. Labeling requirements for gas stoves. 1. For the purposes of
23 this section, "gas stove" means a stove or range that utilizes natural
24 gas or propane and is used for food preparation, whether in a commercial
25 or residential setting, and provides at least one of the following func-
26 tions:

27 (a) surface cooking;

28 (b) oven cooking; or

29 (c) broiling.

30 2. No person, firm, partnership, association, or corporation shall
31 sell or offer for sale at retail to a consumer in this state any gas
32 stove unless the following requirements are met:

33 (a) A removable label is affixed to the gas stove if such stove is
34 displayed for sale outside of a package, or the package in which it is
35 contained, with a type size no smaller than the largest type size used
36 for other consumer information on the product or package, is in a promi-
37 nent location, and bears the following message:

38 "WARNING: Gas stoves can emit gases (such as NITROGEN DIOXIDE, CARBON
39 MONOXIDE, BENZENE, and FORMALDEHYDE) inside homes at levels exceeding
40 the EPA's standards for outdoor air quality. The presence of these
41 pollutants can affect your health and may exacerbate or contribute to
42 the development of respiratory illnesses. Properly installed and oper-
43 ating ventilation to the outdoors can reduce but not eliminate emis-
44 sions."

45 (b) (i) A sign or poster shall be displayed conspicuously at the prem-
46 ises on which the sale takes place bearing the message required by para-
47 graph (a) of this subdivision. Such sign or poster must have conspicuous
48 lettering in at least seventy-two point bold face type, except that the
49 word "warning" shall be in at least two-inch lettering. Such sign or
50 poster shall be placed as close as possible to the place where gas
51 stoves are displayed for sale so that it is noticeable and easily read-
52 able by a consumer examining any displayed gas stoves for sale.

53 (ii) If the sale takes place on the internet, a notice shall be posted
54 in a conspicuous location on the web page on which the gas stove is
55 listed for sale, bearing the message required by paragraph (a) of this
56 subdivision.

1 3. The department of state may adopt regulations regarding the place-
2 ment and format of labels, signs, and posters to comply with this
3 section.

4 4. Any person who violates any provision of this section shall receive
5 a warning notice for the first such violation. A person shall be liable
6 to the state of New York for a civil penalty not to exceed two hundred
7 fifty dollars for the second violation and not to exceed one thousand
8 dollars for any subsequent violation. A hearing or opportunity to be
9 heard shall be provided prior to the assessment of any civil penalty.

10 5. The department of state and the office of the attorney general are
11 authorized to enforce the provisions of this section.

12 § 4. This act shall take effect one year after it shall have become a
13 law.