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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eugene and Springfield Area Chambers of Commerce release a statement about a joint membership survey regarding the City of Eugene's recent efforts to decarbonize local buildings.

The City of Eugene is considering a ban on natural gas and other fossil fuel infrastructure in newly constructed local buildings.

Recognizing the significant impact this could have immediately and in the future for local businesses, the Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce together developed and administered a survey of their members to measure business community sentiment on these issues and the impacts such policies could have on local organizations, jobs, and families.

The 24-question survey contained three parts- demographic questions, questions gauging awareness of local policy efforts, and questions relating to businesses current natural gas use and policy preferences. More than 235 local businesses responded to the survey.

Overwhelmingly, respondents opposed local government mandating a ban on natural gas in new buildings while 22% indicated they would relocate their business if such a ban went into place. Preliminary estimates suggest this relocation could represent as many as 1000 local jobs.

Over 90% of respondents shared they believe a decision on the prohibition of natural gas in new homes and commercial buildings should be left to voters, not the Eugene City Council.

More than three-quarters of respondents believe that any carbon reduction-related mandates should be taken at a state or federal level.

“To date we have not seen local economic data or a robust outreach effort from the City of Eugene to better understand how these policies will impact our local businesses and employees. Sweeping policy decisions such as these should come with a “triple-bottom-line” analysis, weighing environmental, social, and economic data. We appreciate the City Council agreeing to do more outreach to businesses this fall, and we hope Council will take seriously the concerns and feedback from locally owned and operated businesses in their decisions. Much more information is needed. This is just a start.” says Brittany Quick-Warner, President and CEO of the Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce.

These survey results illuminate the potential, significant economic impacts of these policy decisions and pose important questions for the City of Eugene and City Council as they consider energy and consumer options within a balanced decarbonization strategy.

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