What is the SAFE Cities movement?

SAFE Cities is a movement of neighbors, local groups, and elected officials working to keep their communities safe from fossil fuels. The campaign supports local community leaders in adopting SAFE policies that protect public health and safety by phasing out fossil fuels and accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. The campaign also connects local efforts to limit fossil fuels to a global call for action, the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

What's different about SAFE Cities?

Many communities are already fighting fossil fuel proposals — from refinery expansions to oil-by-rail plans, pipeline proposals, and LNG facilities, as well as the expansion of the residential and commercial network of fracked gas. The SAFE Cities movement aims to help local leaders and community members end all of that by using local regulatory power to block fossil fuel infrastructure projects — before they're even proposed. When local government leaders use their regulatory authority to implement policies to keep their communities safe from explosions, spills, and pollution risks, this means that instead of investing limited resources in evaluating fossil fuel projects one by one, local leaders are instead freed up to help their communities create clean energy jobs and build the clean energy infrastructure that is so desperately needed.

SAFE Cities is striking a chord with communities because it hits on two of the most defining issues of our time: climate and social justice. Many communities on the front lines of fossil fuel fights are the same communities that have been dealing for decades with the impacts of air and water pollution. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed how air pollution is directly linked to poor health outcomes, so SAFE Cities policies provide community leaders with a way to fight climate change and create more just and equitable communities at the same time.

What are SAFE policies?

SAFE policies are championed by local elected leaders in the U.S. and Canada who are committed to climate action and to protecting public health and safety from the risks of fossil fuels. Cities, counties, ports, and even whole provinces and states are joining the SAFE movement by deploying local regulatory powers to pass policies that protect public health and safety by reducing risks from fossil fuel explosions, spills, and pollution. At the same time, they're passing policies to limit the expansion of oil and gas systems, like requiring new buildings to be 100% electric.

These policies fall into four categories:
- **Local government resolutions** such as climate emergency declarations that explicitly mention the need to end fossil fuel expansion, resolutions affirming commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement, endorsements of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, etc.
- **Temporary restrictions on new fossil fuel infrastructure** such as emergency moratoriums to stop new proposals for fossil fuel infrastructure that are put in place while a longer term plan can be developed.
- **Permanent restrictions on new fossil fuel infrastructure** such as permanent policies using local regulatory power that focus on preventing fossil fuel infrastructure expansion to reduce the

risk of spills, explosions, and other environmental hazards while protecting public health and safety.
- **Electrification policies** such as mandates that new buildings be 100% electric, plans to electrify public transportation fleets, bans on the construction of new gas stations, etc.

Where are SAFE policies already being implemented?

More than 30 cities and counties across the U.S. and Canada have already passed concrete policies to build healthy communities, stop fossil fuel expansion, build renewable energy infrastructure, and create good, long-term jobs. Where national governments are failing to hold industry accountable, cities and counties — the places where people are directly impacted by the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure — are beginning to understand the urgent need to take action on climate and affirm a 100% electric future.

Here's who's leading the way:
- **Vancouver, British Columbia:** In 2013, the Vancouver City Council passed a ban on coal shipping and storage within city limits, preventing coal export and handling facilities to take root in this major West Coast port city.
- **South Portland, Maine:** In 2014, the South Portland City Council passed a policy to block transport of tar sands oil through their community.
- **Santa Cruz County, California:** In 2014, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to ban oil and gas exploration and development.
- **Whatcom County, Washington:** In 2016, the Whatcom County Council passed a temporary moratorium on all new unrefined fossil fuel export facilities, and is working to make these protections permanent.
- **Portland, Oregon:** In 2016, the Portland City Council became the first major municipality to ban bulk storage of fossil fuels, effectively stopping oil trains from running through the city.
- **Baltimore, Maryland:** In 2017, the Baltimore City Council passed a land use ordinance to prevent the build out of any new oil train facilities in the city, and is considering legislation to ban new gas stations in the city.
- **Berkeley, California:** In 2019, the Berkeley City Council voted unanimously to adopt a "first in the nation" ordinance that prohibits gas in virtually all new construction.
- **King County, Washington:** In 2020, the King County Council passed several policies, including a permanent ban on new bulk fossil fuel storage and on new fossil fuel development.
- **Culver City, California:** In 2020, the Culver City Council took the first necessary steps to phase out oil extraction in the city's portion of an urban oil field — the largest in the nation.

Get involved

- Learn more about SAFE Cities at https://www.stand.earth/SAFE and check out this map to see where groups are already organizing to pass SAFE policies.
- Sign up to join an existing SAFE group or create a new SAFE group in your community.
- Get resources for local government leaders, including examples of existing SAFE ordinances.
- Learn more about the health, jobs, and financial benefits of SAFE Cities policies.
- If you're already working on or have passed policies that restrict fossil fuels, let us know.