



# CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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## **Clean Energy Advocates Join Healthcare Professionals to Discuss Health Benefits of Electrification for Southern Illinois Families**

**Carbondale, Illinois**—Environmental advocates will host an online panel of Illinois healthcare professionals to discuss indoor air pollution and children's health. This topic is of growing interest, as studies link adverse health impacts to burning gas for heating homes and cooking. This free virtual event, which will include a community discussion, is:

**Homes of the Future in Southern Illinois: A Healthcare Professional's Perspective**  
**6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28**  
Please RSVP here: [sc.org/cleanheathealth](https://sc.org/cleanheathealth)

This panel discussion follows a Sept. 27 event in which environmental and consumer advocates partnered with Carbondale community leaders to give area residents an overview of the benefits of building electrification—the process of replacing equipment and appliances like furnaces and stoves that run on fossil fuels with their electric counterparts. There are financial benefits to electrification. Electric heat pumps are 50-60 percent more efficient than a traditional furnace or boiler, and in months to come another discussion will focus on the generous financial incentives to electrify homes.

The Feb. 28 virtual event will focus on yet another benefit of moving away from gas: health. A [Stanford University study](#) indicates that gas pollutes indoor air quality with benzene, a chemical that causes cancer. Burning methane gas also produces dangerous pollutants like carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter that increase risks of childhood asthma. One in five Illinois cases of childhood asthma are attributable to cooking with gas, [according to a recent peer-reviewed analysis](#).

The online panel Feb. 28 will include the following speakers:

- Dr. Susan Buchanan is a clinical associate professor of environmental and occupational health sciences at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health and an occupational and environmental medicine physician. Dr. Buchanan, who directs the Great Lakes Center for Reproductive and Children's Environmental Health, is an expert in health problems related to toxic substances and other environmental hazards in the workplace or community.
- Dr. Daren Siri of the Midwest Allergy Sinus Asthma + Respiratory, with locations in Central Illinois, is a fellow of the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI) and president of the Sangamon County Medical Society, a nonprofit medical organization in Springfield. In Springfield, Dr. Siri is an anaphylaxis community educator, associated with ACAAI and the Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics.

“Investments in electrification of our grid through landmark climate legislation like Illinois’ Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and the federal Inflation Reduction Act provide equitable paths for Illinoisans to transition to powering

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their homes with clean energy,” said **Jane Cogie, chair of the Shawnee Group of Sierra Club Illinois**. “We hope to have a substantive discussion about how electrification protects the health of our families as well as the planet.”

“Outdoor air quality was one of the first emphases of the environmental movement,” said **Rev. Wade Halva, Southern Illinois Outreach Coordinator for Faith in Place**. “Now, with how much time we spend indoors, we’re looking at the impacts of indoor air quality, which includes how we heat and cook.”

This event is hosted by Sierra Club Illinois, Faith in Place and the Citizens Utility Board (CUB). Local leaders participating include the City of Carbondale; Carbondale United; NAACP, Carbondale Chapter; the Black Graduate Greek Council of Carbondale; the Sustainability Office of Southern Illinois University; and the Shawnee Group of Sierra Club Illinois.

Attendees will be able to ask questions. Please RSVP via [sc.org/cleanheathealth](https://sc.org/cleanheathealth)

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**Citizens Utility Board (CUB)** is celebrating its 40th anniversary as Illinois’ leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. In 2024, CUB is celebrating its 40th anniversary of consumer advocacy work. For more information, call CUB’s Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556 or visit CUB’s award-winning website, [www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org](http://www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org).

**Faith in Place** is the proud affiliate of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin Interfaith Power & Light. Faith in Place empowers people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice—providing resources to educate, connect and advocate for healthier communities For more information about Faith in Place’s work, please visit: [www.faithinplace.org](http://www.faithinplace.org).

**Sierra Club Illinois** is the local Chapter of Sierra Club—America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.8 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information about Sierra Club’s work in Illinois, visit [www.sierraclub.org/illinois](http://www.sierraclub.org/illinois).