



Mayor
City Hall
300 LaPorte Ave.
PO Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522
970.416.2154
970.224.6107 - fax
fcgov.com

April 24, 2019

Air Quality Advisory Board
c/o Arsineh Hecobian, Chair
PO Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522

Dear Ms. Hecobian and Board Members:

On behalf of City Council, thank you for providing us the April 24, 2019 memorandum regarding "Air Quality Advisory Board: Radon Program Recommendation."

We appreciate you sharing your thoughts and recommendations on this important topic, as detailed in your memo.

We sincerely appreciate your comments. Thank you again for writing.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wade Troxell". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Wade Troxell
Mayor

/sek

Cc: City Council Members
Darin Atteberry, City Manager
Cassie Archuleta, Manager, Environmental Sustainability



Environmental Services
222 LaPorte Avenue
PO Box 580
Fort Collins, CO 80522
970.221-6600
fcgov.com/environmentalservices

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 24, 2019
To: Mayor and City Councilmembers
From: Arsineh Hecobian, AQAB Chair

CC: Air Quality Advisory Board
Darin Atteberry, City Manager

Re: **Air Quality Advisory Board: Radon Program Recommendations**

Long term exposure to Radon can be deadly¹. Radon is an odorless, colorless, and radioactive gas that occurs naturally. It can seep into buildings and accumulate in areas that are not properly ventilated. Radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in smokers in the United States and the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers². Indeed, there is a 50% increased risk of having lung cancer after 15 years of exposure to radon at USEPA's action level of 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L)³. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in men and women each year⁴. In Colorado we have high levels of radon in our soils⁵, which based on points presented above makes radon awareness, testing, and mitigation important in reducing occurrences of lung cancer and improving quality of life in our state.

The good news is that when elevated radon levels are found in a house, they can be reduced¹. Testing for radon levels in houses is inexpensive and easy⁶. Based on information provided to AQAB from the City of Fort Collins staff, our existing radon programs are only partially successful in encouraging residential radon testing and mitigation. Thus, our recommendations, following solutions provided by the City of Fort Collins staff in a presentation on February 25, 2019 are:

- Require radon testing and disclosure in residential house sales and residential rental transactions
- Require all radon contractors and/or all persons performing radon mitigation work to be certified
- Offer mitigation assistance based on staff recommendation for maximum gain
- Provide support for additional education and outreach ideas as presented by staff

More details on each bullet point are provided below:

Require radon testing and disclosure in residential house sales and residential rental transactions

This is not a call to test all residential structures but will eventually result in testing most, which is important as Colorado and Fort Collins is located on a high radon zone (USEPA zone 1). In the latest

¹ https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-11/documents/success_stories.pdf

² <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/radon-and-your-health>

³ http://www.certified.us/CDPHE_DO/Part4.html

⁴ <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/non-small-cell-lung-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>

⁵ <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/zonemapcolor.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/family/minutes/index.htm>



survey of Fort Collins residents where houses tested above the recommended action level for radon, 36% of those with elevated levels did not perform any mitigation action. Also, many houses are never tested, as currently the test is voluntary. Staff has observed in the past that when homeowners test and have high radon levels, they will frequently proceed with mitigation, so the requirement during home sales will inevitably result in a much better rate of cancer avoidance. In addition, in keeping with the well established premise of environmental right-to-know, tenants should be provided with the information so they can make their own decisions on where it is best to live.

Require all radon contractors and/or all persons performing radon mitigation work to be certified

This is not a requirement for the certification of all individuals conducting radon mitigation work, but for the presence of one certified individual in the company. This model is currently being followed by companies who are certified via the National Radon Proficiency Program⁷.

Offer mitigation assistance based on staff recommendation for maximum gain

Fort Collins has historically had a loan assistance program that covered, among other things, radon mitigation (zero interest loans)⁸. Unfortunately, this program was cancelled this year. The AQAB members recommend reinstatement of this or a similar program (any combination or one of loans, rebates, or grants as recommended by City of Fort Collins staff) that can be used to assist the public in addressing radon mitigation costs specifically.

Provide support for additional education and outreach ideas as presented by staff

The current plans for education on the serious nature of radon in houses in Fort Collins can be greatly improved. The City of Fort Collins staff have already started to address some of the gaps in the radon education program but much more can be done if they are provided with sufficient resources. Another challenging aspect of addressing radon is evaluating the cost/benefit aspect of testing and mitigating radon when compared to saving lives, hospital visits, workdays missed, etc. The City of Fort Collins did not have adequate resources to address this during this phase. Having results from a cost benefit analysis would be very helpful in clarifying the direction of action for radon testing and mitigation in Fort Collins and thus improving air quality and life experience for the residents of our City.

⁷ <https://certifiedradonpros.org/co.html>

⁸ https://www.fcgov.com/utilities/img/site_specific/uploads/zilch_loan_application.pdf