REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: DECEMBER 2020

2020 CONCLUDES WITH FOUR NEW REACH CODES APPROVED

The California Energy Commission approved four new reach code packages at its monthly business meeting on December 9, 2020.

Ordinances passed by City of San Mateo, City of Redwood City, City of East Palo Alto and Town of Los Altos Hills were formally approved by the Commission.

Highlights of the approved ordinances include:

City of San Mateo

- Newly constructed residential and office use buildings to be all electric with an exception allowed for new multifamily buildings with 100% affordable units
- Mixed fuel multifamily affordable buildings must meet higher efficiency standards than the 2019 Energy Code

City of Redwood City

- Newly constructed building to be all electric with exceptions allowed for hospitals, laboratories, commercial kitchen equipment, affordable housing where 100% of the units are affordable, and ADUs
- PV systems on all new buildings

City of East Palo Alto

- Newly constructed buildings to be all electric with exceptions allowed for laboratories, emergency operation centers, commercial kitchens, affordable housing projects, and ADUs
- Prewiring for electric appliances where gas appliances are installed
- PV systems on all new buildings

Town of Los Altos Hills

- Newly constructed low rise residential buildings install heat pump space heating and water heating systems
- Prewiring for electric appliances if gas appliances are installed for cooking and clothes drying

This brings the total number of 33 reach codes from 29 jurisdictions for the 2019 Energy Code cycle approved by the Commission. Several additional jurisdictions have adopted energy-related or electrification reach codes that are not subject to CEC approval. Currently, one of every three Californians live in a community with a code exceeding the statewide standard.

Visitors can browse our website for detailed information about adopted reach codes throughout the state (map view or the adopted ordinances list).

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 13: Energy Commission: Monthly Business Meeting

January 19-21: Cleantech Forum San Francisco

January 11- February 1: CABEC's 2021 Virtual Conference Series "Solving the Energy Puzzle"

February 1-2: California Irrigation Institute Annual Conference



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NEW THIS MONTH!

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION CELEBRATES 45 YEARS OF ENERGY LEADERSHIP



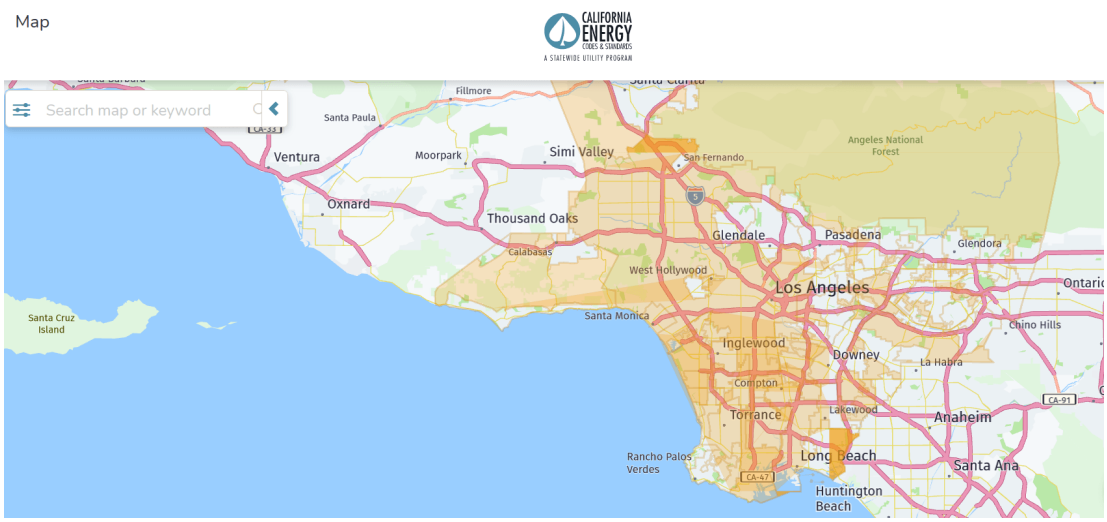
During the week of December 7-11, 2020, the Energy Commission celebrated its 45th anniversary with two special events.

On Monday, December 7, the Commission hosted a virtual event featuring energy leaders reflecting on the CEC's 45-year history and looking ahead to future possibilities.

On Thursday, December 10, the Commission hosted its inaugural Clean Energy Hall of Fame Awards, honoring the leadership and outstanding achievements of individuals helping advance California's clean energy goals.

The events can be viewed on the Commission's YouTube channel and associated materials are available on the Commission's website.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ADVANCE REACH CODE DEVELOPMENT IN 2020



2020 was a busy year for Southern California local governments working on reach codes, with more than one dozen cities and counties actively pursuing them. This momentum developed during the worst pandemic in 100 years while cities and counties were transitioning to new online business procedures.

Stakeholders such as investor-owned utilities via the statewide reach code program, environmental groups including the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and the Sierra Club, and non-profits like the Building Decarbonization Coalition (BDC) are actively collaborating in advancing reach code awareness and development.

Regional Energy Networks (RENs) and Community Choice Aggregators (CCAs) are also important reach code partners; some CCAs based in Northern California provide financial incentives to residents, businesses and local jurisdictions implementing reach codes.

The activity in the southern part of the state is not a surprise to many, including Amy Rider, Principal of Archamy Consulting, and a reach code consultant to BDC, who works with many Los Angeles-area local governments. Ms. Rider commented, “People are spending so much time at home, between distance learning, sheltering in place and avoiding poor air quality from this season’s wildfires. As a result, we have seen an increased awareness of our appliances and the connection between those appliances, our pocketbooks, and our health. This awareness is definitely translating to a greater interest in energy efficiency and electric appliances, further paving the way for local government action in the form of reach codes.”

The regional landscape changed considerably when the Ojai City Council voted unanimously in November 2020 to adopt an all-electric reach code for nearly all new residential and commercial buildings, making it the first city in Southern California to embrace an all-electric future. Steve Colome, who was appointed by the Mayor to Ojai's Climate Emergency Mobilization Committee responsible for writing the new ordinance, commented, "We wanted to 'plant a flag in the ground' with this reach code and lead. It sends an important signal—greenhouse gases [GHGs] matter." In another first for Southern California, Ojai's reach code was spawned by their July 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration Resolution, since it was responsible for the creation of the Committee.

While electrification and reducing GHG emissions are driving reach code momentum for many Southern California local governments, Climate Action Plans and Sustainability Plans are also centers of activity in 2020. Building electrification is now recognized as a major source for GHG savings.

Palm Springs is investigating an electrification-focused reach code, enabled through its Climate Action Roadmap, scheduled for completion in early 2021. Thousand Oaks, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara County, and others are using comprehensive and strategic energy and environmental planning exercises to consider reach codes. Notably, Thousand Oaks includes reach codes in their new Climate and Environmental Action Plan. Others, such as Ventura County, are using more traditional General Plan Updates (GPUs) for their reach code efforts. Ruben Barrera, Ventura County's Chief Building Official, said, "Our Board is interested in reducing GHGs, and they recognize that they can get significant reductions through the built environment. Reach codes were included in our GPU."

Here is a quick look at representative policies and plans that Southern California jurisdictions are using to enable reach codes:

- Santa Monica was the first Southern California city to adopt an electric-preferred reach code in late 2019. The city wanted to spur more solar and used building codes in an earlier 2017 reach code to strengthen a 2016 solar mandate while mandating greater energy efficiency.
- Earlier this year, multiple City Council members in Culver City expressed a desire to adopt an electrification reach code and incorporate it into the City's energy efficiency building codes. City staff and a consultant are drafting a reach code to present in 2021.
- In 2019-2020, Los Angeles County included a goal to adopt a reach code to help promote building decarbonization as part of their Our County Climate

Action Plan. The County is soliciting industry feedback on potential reach code measures now and into early 2021.

- In September 2020, Ventura County tied their reach goal to the earlier mentioned GPU and linked it formally to a natural gas ban in new buildings.
- South Pasadena's draft Climate Action Plan from 2020 includes a mitigation measure to adopt an electrification reach code.
- The City of Long Beach's draft Climate Action & Adaptation Plan includes a mitigation measure to "update building codes to reduce emissions in new residential and commercial buildings." The City is looking at reach codes as a potential measure.
- The West Hollywood City Council recently received and filed a mid-project update on their Climate Action Plan, which includes adopting an electrification reach code as a mitigation measure.



OTHER REACH CODE NEWS BRIEFS

October 2026 September 2026 August 2026
Archives