REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: DECEMBER 2024

ANNUAL ROUND-UP: A LOOK AT 2024

2024 was another memorable year for local jurisdictions as well as the statewide Local Energy Codes program! From new reach code adoptions to new resource development, the year was one of pragmatism and progress, culminating in the adoption of a new statewide Energy Code in September by the California Energy Commission.



NEW REACH CODE ADOPTIONS

Despite early setbacks, local jurisdictions pivoted and continued to move forward with new approaches. Many communities pursued energy performance measures while others focused on flexible path ordinances.

City of Brisbane: Repealed its previous all-electric ordinance and adopted a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings. Amended EV Infrastructure requirements to meet or exceed intervening code requirements.

Town of Corte Madera: Adopted a flexible path measure for residential additions and alterations.

City of Cupertino: Replaced its previous all-electric ordinance with a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings.

City of East Palo Alto: Replaced its previous all-electric ordinance with a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for mixed-fuel residential buildings and commercial kitchens.

City of Encinitas: Adopted a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings.

County of Napa: Adopted an energy performance reach code for residential new construction. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings.

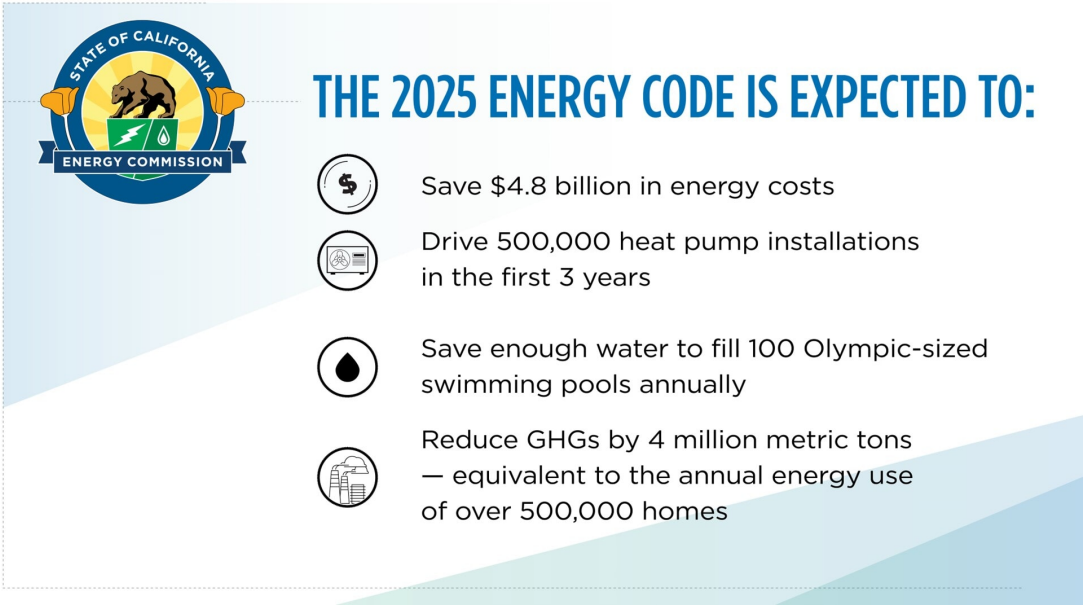
City of Palo Alto: Replaced its previous all-electric ordinance with a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings.

City of San Luis Obispo: Adopted a flexible path measure for single family residential additions and alterations.

City of San Rafael: Adopted a flexible path measure for single family residential additions and alterations. See the Frontrunner story below.

City of Santa Monica: Replaced its previous all-electric ordinance with a new construction energy performance reach code. Expanded electric-readiness requirements for all mixed-fuel buildings.

For more details about the reach codes adopted by any of these jurisdictions, visit localenergycodes.com for a continuously updated interactive map as well as a comprehensive list of reach code adoptions, including ordinances and staff reports.



2025 ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS

The California Energy Commission adopted the 2025 Energy Efficiency Standards in its September Business Meeting. The California Building Standards Commission approved the standards at its meeting on December 17th.

For highlights on changes in the 2025 Code, read the October issue, which was devoted to this topic.



STATEWIDE REACH CODES TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

The statewide team focused on developing resources to support local jurisdictions in replacing their all-electric ordinances with effective alternatives as well as in other areas, such as the new CALGreen online resource hub, the new Water Demand Calculator, and more!

- Collaboration with the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC), the California Division of the State Architect (DSA) and AIA California, in developing CALGreenInfo.com (See the August News Brief article)
- Updated Reach Codes Primer
- Fact Sheets for new Intervening Cycle EV Charging requirements
- Resources for Water Demand Calculator (Report, Executive Summary, Fact Sheet, Presentation)
- Updated Single Family New Construction Cost-Effectiveness resources
- Updated Single Family Retrofit resources

- Conferences and webinars: participation in the National Codes Conference panel in May, September webinar on cost-effectiveness analysis for single family retrofit, CABEC Annual Conference panel in October
- Updates to the free online Cost-Effectiveness Explorer

It's exciting to witness and participate in all the new efforts to continue achieving climate and energy efficiency goals at the local, regional and state levels.

For more information on how the Statewide team can help, visit localenergycodes.com!

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 9: 3C-REN: Heat Pumps for Heating and Cooling – Part 2: All-Electric Design and Construction Series

January 14: Energy Code Ace: 2025 Title 24, Part 6 Essentials — Residential Standards: What's New

January 14: I-REN C&S Training: Heat Pump Water Heaters for Building Departments

January 15: Energy Code Ace: 2025 Title 24, Part 6 Essentials — Nonresidential Standards: What's New

January 21: California Energy Commission Business Meeting

January 22: 3C-REN: Introduction to the Energy Code

January 25: Conservation and Planning League: 2025 California Environmental Assembly, UC-Davis

January 27-29: Cleantech Forum North America. San Diego.


goals
this
month
NOVEMBER

CITY OF SAN RAFAEL PURSUES COLLABORATION IN ITS DEVELOPMENT AND ADOPTION OF A FLEX PATH RESIDENTIAL REACH CODE



San Rafael has a tradition of strong collaboration with its stakeholders as well as fellow jurisdictions and county government in Marin County. So it was natural to continue this tradition as the city staff focused on developing a new reach code following the repeal of its all-electric reach code in the wake of the Berkeley decision. Notes Cory Bytof, Sustainability Program Manager, “it was important for the city to include the perspectives not only of its own residents, but of stakeholders across the county. We’ve been fortunate to have committed partners in government both at the county level and in other cities around Marin. Our Chief Building Official has a strong working relationship with local architects and construction firms, which helps us understand how regulations will work on the ground.”The city staff also worked to develop an ordinance that would be both effective in helping achieve its long-term climate goals but also achievable for homeowners, since single family homes make up just over 50% of San Rafael’s existing housing stock and will be key in reducing emissions. “We focused on creating an entire process that would be flexible enough for our residents, paired with education and tools that simplified compliance,” added Bytof.

The resulting ordinance, adopted by the City Council in June 2024 and approved by the California Energy Commission in September 2024, provides a flexible path for single-family remodel projects over 500 feet^2 that were built before 2010. This “Flex-Path” seeks to increase energy efficiency and encourage electrification, while the homeowner is already making significant changes to their home.

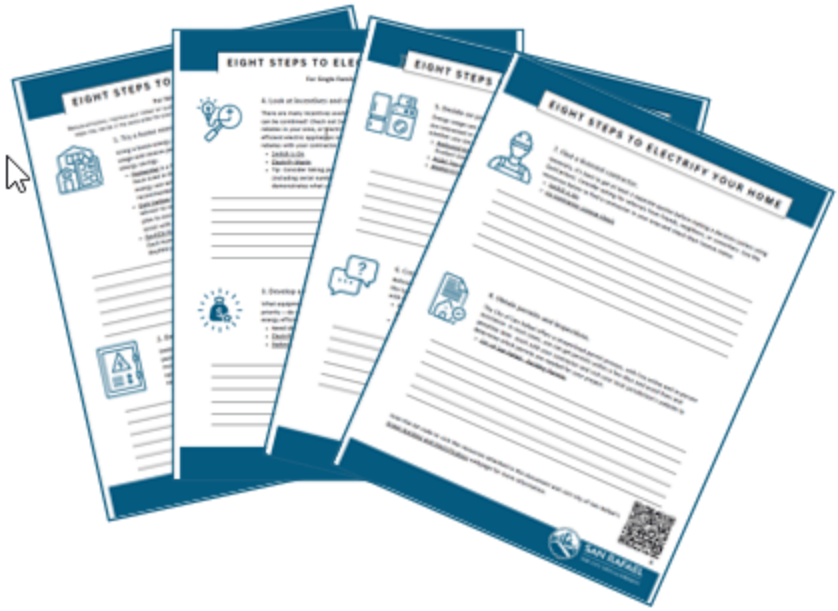
A Look at the Flex Path

The measure offers a menu of energy saving options that homeowners can choose from that have been verified for cost-effectiveness. Each option has an associated point value based on site energy savings. The higher the energy savings from implementation, the higher the score for the option. One section focuses on envelope related efficiency measures such as insulation, windows, and duct sealing, the next section focuses on heating, venting and air conditioning (HVAC) and water heating electrification options, and the final section consists of solar options.

Tools for Implementation

The City staff recognized the implementation process can be challenging for homeowners, so simplifying the process and providing comprehensive information on planning and compliance resources, financial incentives and FAQs was vital. They developed an online hub that contains multiple resources, both those provided by the City, such as the 8-Step Guide to Electrify Your Home (see below) as well as other resources from Marin County (Electrify Marin), the State of California (Building and Home Energy Resource Hub), and national organizations such as Rewire America (Electrify Everything guide). The City has also published a simple compliance checklist

for applicants on their Green Building and Electrification web page. The City is offering the 8 Steps Guide to other jurisdictions to personalize for their own use. Interested individuals may contact Sustainability@cityofsanrafael.org.



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OTHER REACH CODE NEWS BRIEFS

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