REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: FEBRUARY 2026

EVENTS ROUNDUP!



WEBINAR ALERT! COST EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS FOR 2025 SINGLE FAMILY NEW CONSTRUCTION

The Statewide Local Energy Codes team will present the cost-effectiveness results for reach code options under the 2025 code for single family new construction in a new webinar on Thursday, March 12, 2026.

The team will provide an overview of the study, measure specifications and cost and savings impacts. Attendees will learn about the most recent cost-effectiveness analyses, as well as the package of efficiency measures analyzed, and the estimated savings impacts relative to the minimum state requirements.

Analysis is focused on the Efficiency LSC compliance metric and results are presented for all sixteen California climate zones (CZs).

Registration information is available here.



UPCOMING ENERGY CODE ACE CONFERENCE OFFERS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR ENERGY CODE EDUCATION

The Energy Code Ace Conference, March 4 – 5, 2026 at The Energy Education Center in Irwindale, offers two days of thought leadership, case studies, in-depth training opportunities, and networking events that will educate attendees about all the updates to the 2025 California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6 or Energy Code).

In addition to individual sessions focusing on all aspects of code compliance, there will be sessions on embodied carbon as a net zero strategy, new reach code pathways, even CEA exam prep workshops.

Commissioner Andrew McAllister from the California Energy Commission will be the keynote speaker on March 5.

Conference details and registration information is available here.

ADDITIONAL 2028 ENERGY CODE WEBINARS COMING IN MARCH

Join the Codes and Standards Enhancement (CASE) Team to learn about upcoming code proposals for the 2028 Building Energy Efficiency Standards:

- **March 4:** Controlled Environment Horticulture Lighting and HVAC/D and Greenhouse Glazing

- **March 10:** Nonresidential Water Heating, HVAC Air-To-Water Heat Pumps (AWHP)
- **March 17:** Data Centers, Healthcare Exceptions, and Nonresidential Fenestration
- **March 17:** Solar Pool Heating and Process Steam Systems
- **March 19:** Compressed Air and Refrigeration
- **March 19:** Indoor Lighting LPDs and Indoor Lighting Controls

Visit title24stakeholders.com for complete details and information.



2028 Building Energy Efficiency Standards

MARCH EVENTS CALENDAR

March 4: New Buildings Institute. Net Zero Energy Buildings—Now and What's Next

March 4-5: Energy Code Ace Conference. Irwindale CA

March 10: 3C-REN: 2025 Energy Code in Practice: Single Family Additions and Alterations

March 12: California Energy Commission: Business Meeting

March 12: I-REN C&S Training: Residential Additions and Alterations (2025 Code)

March 12-15: CivicWell Policymakers Conference. Yosemite CA.

March 18: BayREN Regional Forum: [Powering Data Centers: Balancing Growth with Sustainability & Affordability]

March 26: USGBC California: [Foundations of Green Building Training (San Diego)]



AC TO HP REACH CODES: A STRATEGIC LEAP TOWARD ENERGY SAVINGS AND ELECTRIFICATION



As California communities search for practical ways to decarbonize while enabling residents and businesses to reduce utility bills, air conditioner (AC) to heat pump (HP) reach codes offer one effective approach. These policies target a cost-sensitive moment in a building's lifecycle: AC replacement. By encouraging the installation of a high efficiency heat pump at the time of AC replacement, cities can progress toward their Climate Action Plan goals at a time when home- and business owners are already evaluating capital investment options.

While electrification is an important outcome to local governments, the primary appeal of AC to HP reach codes to many stakeholders lies in their ability to reduce ongoing energy consumption and utility costs, thus delivering financial and climate benefits simultaneously.

AC to HP Overview

Heat pumps provide both cooling and heating by transferring heat rather than generating it. This makes heating significantly more efficient and better for the environment than AC units for cooling paired with gas furnaces or electric resistance for heating. Under AC to HP reach codes, when an existing AC unit is replaced, the new system must either be a heat pump or an AC unit with additional measures that achieve comparable energy savings.

The policies developed by different jurisdictions vary in terms of details and aspects included. For more complete details, visit the Adopted Ordinances page to review specific measures.

Unlocking Residential Energy Savings

In residential buildings, these policies can offer another effective approach to electrification. Many California homes rely on separate systems for heating and cooling, typically pairing a gas furnace with an electric air conditioner. Replacing the AC with a heat pump eliminates the need for fossil fuel based heating, one of the largest contributors to residential emissions. Because heat pumps operate more efficiently than conventional systems, homeowners benefit from lower energy bills over time.

Numerous jurisdictions—including Alameda, Glendale, Los Altos Hills, Los Gatos, Menlo Park, Moreno Valley, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Saratoga, and Sunnyvale—have adopted AC to HP requirements for single-family homes and as of this writing, are awaiting approval from the Building Standards Commission (BSC) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) under the new submittal and approval process set forth by Assembly Bill 130 (AB130).

Expanding Impact in Nonresidential Buildings

Although AB 130 temporarily limits new residential reach code adoption through 2031 unless exceptions are met, nonresidential reach codes remain unencumbered and AC to HP reach codes can apply here, too. Nonresidential buildings—offices, schools, retail spaces, and other facilities—often have larger, centralized heating loads served by large AC units with gas furnaces, making electrification via heat pumps particularly beneficial. Aligning heat pump installation with natural equipment replacement cycles minimizes disruption and cost. Additionally, electrified HVAC systems can integrate more seamlessly with onsite solar panels and battery storage systems, mitigating the potential increase in peak demand and enhancing energy resilience – important benefits as California grapples with more frequent heat waves and grid constraints.

Santa Cruz is the first California jurisdiction to adopt a nonresidential AC to HP reach code (also pending approval from the BSC and CEC at this writing), signaling an interest in extending this policy to the commercial sector. Together, residential and nonresidential ordinances demonstrate increasing market confidence in heat pump technology across the state.

Policy Support & Resources

AC to HP reach codes are supported by a combination of technical work and evolving policy efforts. The Statewide Local Energy Codes program provides a range of resources all designed to ease burdens on local staff by lowering administrative barriers and offering standardized justification.

These include model ordinance language, cost-effectiveness studies, staff reports, and documentation of adopted ordinances. Resources specific to residential buildings can be found here, while those specific to nonresidential buildings can be found here.

Conclusion

AC to Heat Pump reach codes represent another important approach in the state's broader decarbonization toolkit: a practical, cost-effective way to reduce emissions, enhance energy performance, and modernize California's building stock. By focusing on equipment turnover events, they continue to achieve HVAC market transformation over time. For both residential and nonresidential buildings, the policy delivers a triple benefit: emissions reduction, energy savings, and utility bill savings.



This program is funded by California utility customers and administered by Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E®) and Southern California Edison Company under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission and in support of the California Energy Commission.

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OTHER REACH CODE NEWS BRIEFS

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