REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: JUNE 2023

GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW EQUITABLE BUILDING DECARBONIZATION PROGRAM



The California Energy Commission received legislative approval to launch a new Equitable Building Decarbonization Program with ambitious goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in homes and advancing energy equity. Because residential and commercial buildings account for about 25% of California's greenhouse gas emissions, the decarbonization of buildings is essential to achieving the state's carbon neutrality goal by 2045. And the participation of all California communities will be needed for the state to achieve its climate and energy goals.

Christine Collopy, Deputy Director of Building Decarbonization Incentives Programs, and Diana Maneta, Building Decarbonization Lead, offered the Statewide Reach Codes Program an overview of the program recently. "Right now, we're in the development stage of the program, with a focus on the Direct Install Program," noted Collopy. The Equitable Building Decarbonization Program has two aspects, a Direct Install program focused on directly installing, at no or low cost, building decarbonization upgrades for low-income and moderate-income households in single-family, multifamily, and manufactured homes in underresourced communities, and a Statewide Incentive Program that will provide incentives for low-carbon building technologies and may be implemented in concert with new federal incentive funds authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Other components proposed for the Direct Install piece include funding allocated for decarbonizing homes owned or managed by California Native American tribes, California tribal organizations, or members of California Native American tribes and support for existing state or local programs that provide building decarbonization upgrades for low- or moderate-income California households.

“For the Direct Install Program,” Maneta offers, “we have issued draft guidelines and are conducting a series of public workshops throughout the month of June at various locations across the state. We’re hoping to gather substantial input from community participants, including local jurisdiction staff, community-based organizations or CBOs and other stakeholders, that will help us establish the most effective program guidelines for the next step of the process. This is to select program administrators for the three regions, Northern, Central and Southern California.”

The workshop schedule includes in-person and virtual options in the following locations:

- June 6: San Francisco
- June 9: Los Angeles
- June 12: Santa Rosa
- June 15: Indio
- June 23: Fresno

Two virtual workshops are also available on June 10 and June 21. The complete schedule can be accessed here. Participants are not restricted to a specific location or date but can attend any workshop that fits their schedules.

The draft guidelines are available for public comment until June 30. Maneta notes that Program staff have also developed questions to guide public input on these draft guidelines. Another valuable resource for local governments is the Empower Innovation initiative, to identify possible partnerships at the local or regional level.

“Local government and community organization input is crucial to the success of the Equitable Building Decarbonization Program,” Collopy and Maneta agree. “We anticipate local governments and community stakeholders will play key roles in the rollout of this program.”

For more information, visit the Equitable Building Decarbonization Program website or email equitablebuildingdecarb@energy.ca.gov.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 7: BayREN & Energy Code Ace On-Line Training: Single-Family Standards - Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

June 13-14: 14th Annual CCEC Forum. Santa Rosa

June 14: 3C-REN: Central Coast and Ventura ICC Chapter Series. 2022 Energy Code Multi Family

June 16: Energy Commission Monthly Business Meeting

June 21: BayREN Regional Forum: The Grid: What is it and Should it Shape Policy for All-Electric Buildings?

June 21-22: Solar and Energy Storage Summit. San Francisco



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NEW THIS MONTH!



Q&A COLUMN: REACH CODES COLLABORATION: A CONVERSATION WITH SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON'S JAY MADDEN

Jay is a Mechanical Engineer at Southern California Edison, where he provides technical assistance to cities and counties developing electrification reach codes. Past work at SCE included managing projects related to emerging HVAC, industrial refrigeration, and whole building technologies that save energy and reduce peak electricity demand.

Prior to joining SCE, Jay Madden spent 30 years designing HVAC, plumbing, and medical gas systems for hospitals, data centers, laboratories, and educational facilities. He holds a BS in Mechanical Engineering from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and an MBA from California State Polytechnic State University, Pomona. He is a registered Mechanical Engineer in the State of California. In his free time, he enjoys open-ocean swimming at the local beaches.

Q: Jay, what do you view as some of the most important benefits from statewide collaboration on reach codes?

A: Many times, we see different jurisdictions create definitions for terms used in reach codes, such as ‘major retrofits’ or similar types of terms. Often, these definitions can vary considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, which can create confusion and difficulty for builders or developers who work across regions. In my view, the ability to collaborate to create a uniform or harmonious set of resources is extremely valuable. Additionally, by pooling resources from across California, the statewide program can help educate and support the widest audience possible.

Q: What are some of the trends you think will be most significant in the current Energy Code cycle?

A: We’re seeing a lot of jurisdictions come to the realization that they need to tackle the energy performance in existing buildings, because these make up such a significant portion of the total building stock. This can present some specific challenges, like the need to balance advancing a community’s interest while still accommodating individual residents’ need, but it is definitely where we will see a lot of activity.

Q: Are there challenges unique to the SCE service territory?

A: We do see more emphasis on cooling-oriented topics, as part of an overall focus on building and transportation electrification. And of course, in Southern California, any activity by the City of Los Angeles is going to be very influential to the entire region.

Q: What activities does SCE undertake specifically to support reach code development by communities in its service territory?

A: We are always available to provide letters of support or appearances at Council meetings if requested by a community. We also will work with specific jurisdictions inside the service territory to support their reach code development efforts. We also operate training and education facilities in Irwindale and Tulare to provide workforce education and training for building officials.

Q: What can jurisdictions in SCE service territory do if they are just beginning to evaluate reach code options?

A: Of course, the statewide program website provides a wide range of resources and technical assistance. Staff in the SCE service territory can also visit our website for more information.



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