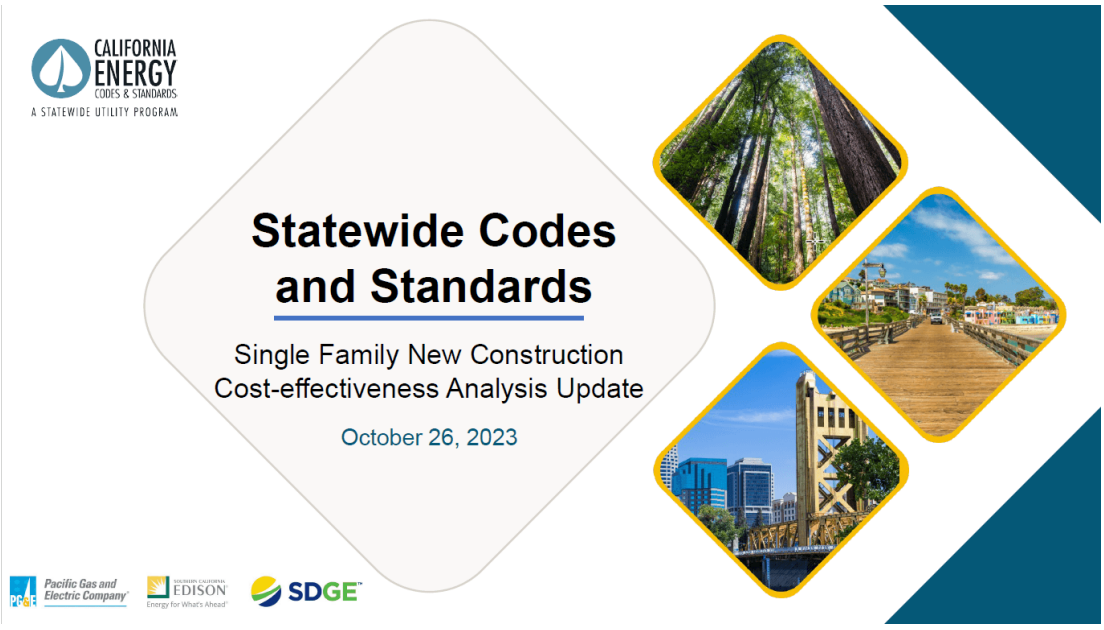
REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: NOVEMBER 2023

RECENT REACH CODES WEBINARS EXPLORE FLEXIBLE PATH POLICYMAKING AND SINGLE FAMILY NEW CONSTRUCTION COST-EFFECTIVENESS

2023 Updates to the Single Family New Construction Cost-Effectiveness Study

On Thursday, October 26, Alea German from Frontier Energy joined Misti Bruceri from the Statewide Reach Codes team to present draft results for the 2023 Updates to the Single Family New Construction Cost Effectiveness Study.

Alea focused on the study approach and results, with specific consideration of the changes to the methodology and subsequent results. These changes included new electrification and NBT utility tariffs, updated gas rates, and requested additional cost sensitivity analyses (future gas equipment cost, a 15-year period of analysis, and escalation rates).



She presented draft results for each of the packages:

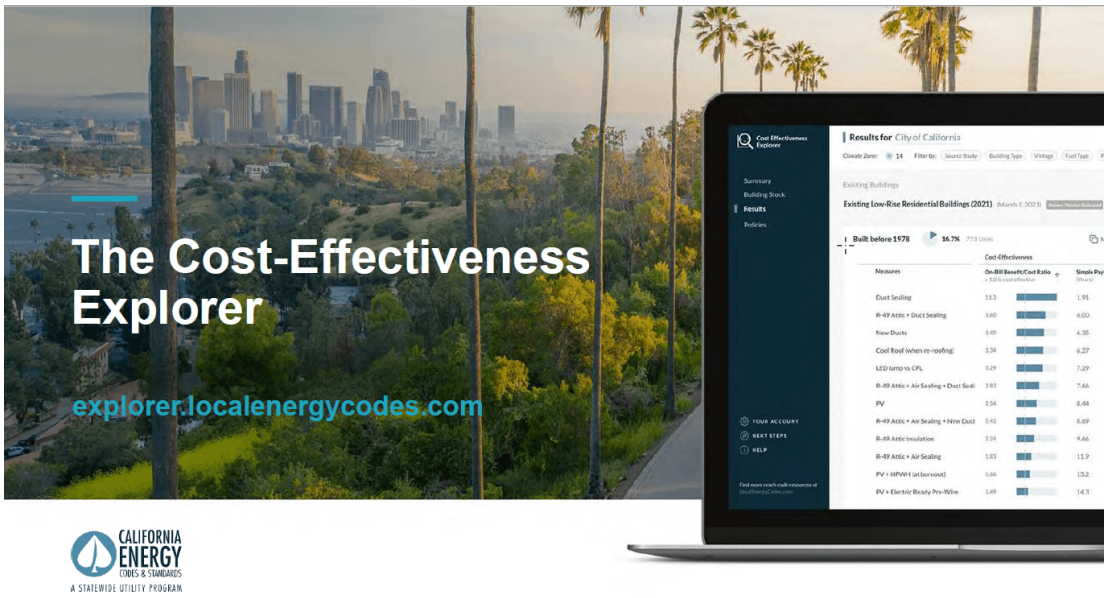
- Prescriptive base case
- All-electric prescriptive minimum
- Efficiency
- Efficiency + high efficiency equipment

- Efficiency + PV
- Efficiency + PV + Battery

Misti explored the impact of the recent CRA ruling on the spectrum of reach code ordinance types, from lower-risk high performance and electric-preferred options to higher-risk all-electric or gas ban approaches. Following that, she led the attendees through a consideration of a high performance ordinance design exercise to illustrate the opportunity such an approach might provide for local jurisdictions.

The final study is anticipated next month.

The webinar materials and recording are available here.



Simplified Flexible Path Policymaking with the Cost-Effectiveness Explorer

The November 1 webinar featured the Cost Effectiveness Explorer development team and Neal DeSnoo (Clean Energy Policy Advisors), who together presented an overview of flexible path policymaking for existing residential construction as well as a hands-on demo of the new Cost-Effectiveness Explorer features that streamline policy design.

Neal first reviewed how flexible path ordinances differ from conventional prescriptive path ordinances. While the latter require specific measures to be implemented by permit applicants, the former allow permit applicants to choose the measures that work best for them from a menu that ensures the project will satisfy a mandated minimum energy savings (required flexible score).

Jasmine Krause from the Explorer development team walked attendees through the simplified features to create a demo flexible path policy. These include a simplified layout where users can easily toggle between the conventional or flexible paths from the same screen. She also demonstrated how easily users can transition existing policies over to the new Explorer format.

Neal concluded the webinar with a discussion of additional considerations jurisdiction staff might evaluate during policymaking, such as focusing on specific vintages, determining trigger events and establishing a target score.

The webinar materials and recording are available here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 5: 3C-REN training: What Energy Consultants Need To Know About HERS Measures

December 7: BayREN Regional Forum: Residential Electrification in the Real World: Navigating Panels and Permits

December 7: 3C-REN training: Using Life Cycle Assessment & Embodied Carbon Calculators to Make Design and Product Choices

December 7: California Energy Commission: Clean Energy Hall of Fame Awards

December 7: 14th Annual Southern California Economic Summit. Los Angeles

December 11: California Water Efficiency Partnership (CalWEP): Winter Plenary. Hybrid

December 12: I-REN training: Residential Envelope Compliance

December 13: California Energy Commission Business Meeting



NEW THIS MONTH!



CITY OF COTATI EMBRACES EARLY ADOPTION OF CALGREEN INTERVENING CYCLE EV CHARGING REQUIREMENTS

The smallest incorporated city in Sonoma County, Cotati enjoys an ideal location just north of San Francisco. With a population of less than 8,000 residents, the city features a hexagonal downtown layout designated a California Historical Landmark, one of only two such designed communities in the United States. Long considered the "Hub" of Sonoma County, Cotati is surrounded by beautiful vistas of hills, vineyards, majestic oaks and redwoods and a long history rooted in agriculture and music. The annual Accordion Festival attracts visitors from across the state and beyond.

Finding Meaningful Progress Toward Community Goals

Cotati has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability, with sustainable resource use and environmental protection woven through the community's General Plan, adopted in 2015. The City participated in the countywide Climate Action 2020 and Beyond Plan, completed in 2016, and adopted a Climate Emergency Resolution in 2019. In 2022, The City Council adopted a fossil fuel station ban similar to those enacted by other jurisdictions across Sonoma County, preventing the creation of new gas stations or expansions of existing gas stations within Cotati city limits. In October 2022, the City adopted the 2022 Building Code, including the Tier 1 voluntary measures in the Green Building Standards Code (known as "CALGreen"), which include higher standards than those of the basic, mandatory Code relating to installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging. The goal of these ordinances is to reduce the potential toxic contamination related to gas stations and reduce fossil fuel emissions by encouraging the use of electric vehicles and alternative forms of transportation. The 2022 Building Code is in effect 2023-2025.

As a natural next step, Council tasked City staff with developing a building electrification ordinance that would include a prohibition on natural gas infrastructure in most new construction. This work was ongoing when the **CRA v City of Berkeley** ruling was issued in April 2023. Notes Autumn Buss, Associate Planner for the City of Cotati, "fortunately, the policy development efforts had included incorporation of the newly emerging CALGreen Building Code Intervening Cycle EV charging provisions, which aligned well with the City's focus on clean energy and transportation. In the aftermath of the **CRA** ruling, Council still wanted to proceed with measures that would not trigger legal challenges but would still advance the City's commitment to achieving its climate and sustainability goals."

While the CALGreen requirements were approved in early August 2023 by the state Building Standards Commission, the effective date is July 1, 2024. City staff conducted a public workshop and presented options to Council in late spring 2023. At that point,

Council decided to adopt the new CALGreen Intervening Cycle Tier 1 EV charging requirements to provide the earliest point of adoption, more than a year before the state required the code update. The ordinance was adopted in late June with an effective date of July 27, 2023.

“The City’s first hotel is under construction and will implement the newly adopted EV charging standards, and there are several multifamily residential projects proposed in which the new standards will significantly increase EV charging availability for residents” says Buss. "Due to a small staff size, ordinance development was conducted collaboratively between the Planning and Building divisions within the City’s Community Development, and supported by Misti Bruceri and the Statewide Reach Codes Team, all of whom contributed to internal consensus as well as expertise for the implementation phase."

“We’re pleased we were able to keep moving forward following the **CRA** ruling,” says Buss, “we believe the adoption of the CALGreen EV charging requirements will provide the city with ongoing ways to achieve its climate goals while welcoming new development.”

The complete Frontrunner story is available here.

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

October 2026 September 2026 August 2026
Archives