REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: NOVEMBER 2025

NEW GRAYWATER REACH CODES OFFER WATER EFFICIENCY PATHWAYS



Using graywater is an excellent way to recycle and conserve water as well as reduce potable water consumption. Graywater (also spelled greywater) is wastewater from household sources other than toilets, including sources such as sinks, showers and bathtubs, and washing machines. Because it has minimal contamination, this water can often be reused for exterior irrigation or flushing toilets.

Two California jurisdictions have recently adopted reach codes that include graywater provisions for new single family home construction.

City of Saratoga

The graywater provisions of the ordinance adopted by the Saratoga City Council on November 5, 2025 require piping to be installed to

permit future use of a graywater system served by the clothes washer and other graywater fixtures in new single and two-family homes.

City of Encinitas

Adopted by the Encinitas City Council on November 5, 2025, the graywater provisions of this ordinance require newly constructed single-family dwelling units to be pre-plumbed for a graywater system with a convenient location for integration with landscape irrigation systems and accepting graywater from all permissible sources.

Visit the Adopted Ordinances page on the Local Energy Codes website to download the ordinances, staff reports, and more.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 4: California Energy Commission, Clean Energy Hall of Fame, Sacramento

December 8: California Energy Commission: Business Meeting

December 9: I-REN C&S Training: 2025 Code Series: Electrification Strategies for Contractors and Architects

December 10: BayREN C&S Training: Nonresidential Tenant Improvements and Alterations

December 10: USGBC-CA: California Green Building Awards and Green Gala, Los Angeles

December 16: 3C-REN Training: Understanding Heat Pump HVAC and Water Heating



NEW THIS MONTH!



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA JURISDICTIONS SHARE THEIR BPS PROGRESS AT NET ZERO CONFERENCE

As California accelerates toward its ambitious decarbonization goals, Building Performance Standards (BPS) are becoming a key policy tool – one poised to transform how jurisdictions measure and manage energy use across the state's building sector. In October, BPS was one of multiple topics covered at the Net Zero Conference in Los Angeles, where a cross-section of policymakers, designers, energy managers, and climate advocates convened to explore how visions of a zero-carbon future can become reality. Other topics included embodied carbon reduction, all-electric systems, resilience planning , equity, and community engagement.

Conference Highlight: BPS Momentum in Southern California

During the conference session on BPS, three local jurisdictions from California unpacked how they are navigating policy development amidst the complex intersection of building benchmarking, Climate Action Plan emissions targets, equity considerations, and enforcement mechanisms. Sustainability staff from West Hollywood, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles County presented their goals, progress, and challenges in developing BPS policies.

West Hollywood's draft BPS applies to buildings over 20,000 square feet and offers two compliance options: the Building Performance Pathway, which requires properties to meet specific site energy use intensity (EUI) and greenhouse gas intensity (GHGI)

targets and the Building Performance Action Plan Pathway, which allows owners to submit a tailored improvement plan outlining measures and timelines to achieve future performance targets. There is also a penalty fee for non-compliance.

Santa Monica's draft BPS builds on decades of progressive green building policy, requiring continuous energy efficiency improvements and electrification readiness in larger buildings. Like West Hollywood, Santa Monica's policy provides multiple compliance pathways. With building emissions accounting for 34% of total emissions in Santa Monica, BPS is slated to be the city's highest-impact climate policy yet.

Continuing the momentum in Southern California, Los Angeles County's draft BPS will extend performance standards to unincorporated areas, aligning local implementation with state carbon neutrality objectives to create a model for regional coordination. The County's draft policy, still under development, brings to light the critical step of data verification to ensure the performance standard has the biggest impact.

Conclusion

The progress from jurisdictions in Southern California and across the state offers a real-time snapshot of what BPS looks like in practice: the challenges of designing equitable compliance pathways, opportunities for alignment with electrification and retrofit programs, and the importance of data transparency and stakeholder engagement.

By advancing BPS, West Hollywood, Santa Monica, and Los Angeles County are leading a powerful shift in how cities approach building decarbonization – achieving significant climate gains from a relatively small share of buildings. Their policies demonstrate how data-driven targets, flexible compliance pathways, and local support programs can accelerate energy efficiency while improving building comfort, resilience, and long-term value. As more California cities look to adopt similar standards, these jurisdictions are setting a statewide precedent for how targeted local action can deliver transformative results for both communities and climate.

Their work provides a roadmap for other California jurisdictions preparing to craft or implement their own building performance ordinances – and signals how local action will continue to define the state's path to net zero.

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October 2026 September 2026 August 2026
Archives