CALIFORNIA ENERGY CODES & STANDARDS

A STATEWIDE UTILITY PROGRAM

Primer: The Local Government Reach Code Process

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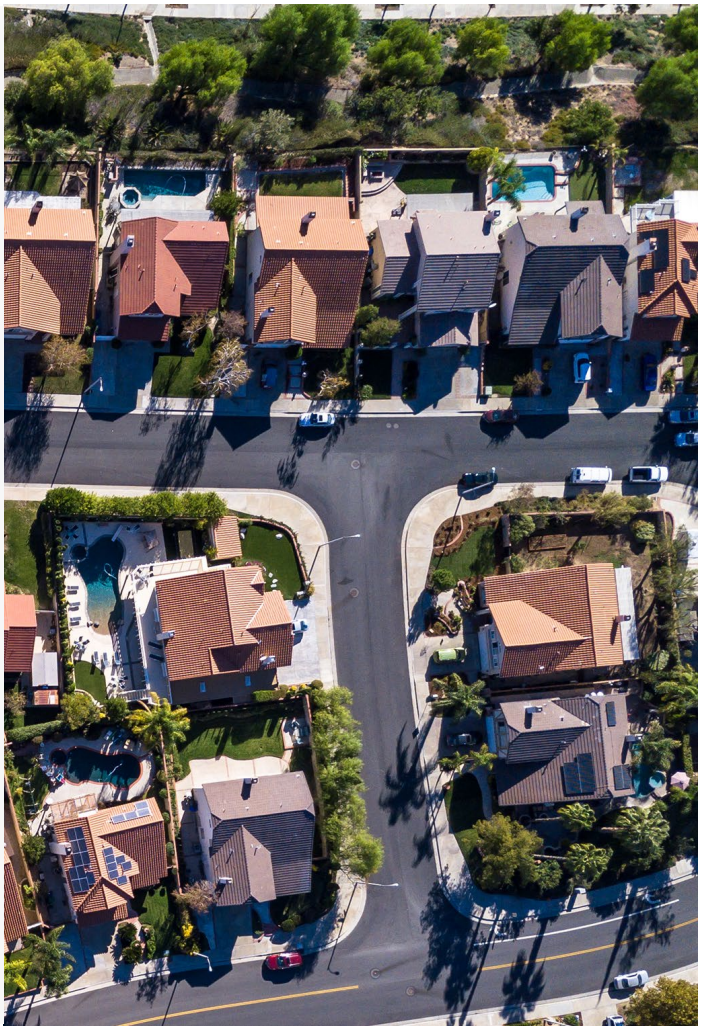

Table 1 Summary of Revisions

Date	Description	Reference (page or section)
9/12/2022	Original Release	N/A
9/12/2024	Updates throughout	

Acronym List

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

B/C – Lifecycle Benefit-to-Cost Ratio

BSC – Building Standards Commission

CA IOUs – California Investor-Owned Utilities

CBECC-Res – Computer program developed by the California Energy Commission for demonstrating compliance with the California Residential Building Energy Efficiency Standards

CEQA – California Environmental Quality Act

CPUC – California Public Utilities Commission

CZ – California Climate Zone

EDR – Energy Design Rating

EF – Energy Factor

GHG – Greenhouse Gas

HVAC – Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

IOU – Investor-Owned Utility

kBtu – kilo-British thermal unit

kWh – Kilowatt Hour

NPV – Net Present Value

OPR – CA Office of Planning and Research

PG&E – Pacific Gas and Electric Company

PV – Photovoltaic

SCE – Southern California Edison

SDG&E – San Diego Gas and Electric

Title 24 – Title 24, Part 6

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Purpose and Overview

Many California cities and counties have adopted regulatory policies to reduce the carbon footprint of buildings, require more electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in buildings and mandate other green building measures. These policies, known as reach codes, are local ordinances that require buildings to go beyond minimum state building code requirements for environmental performance, including, but not limited to energy efficiency, renewable energy, building electrification, EV charging infrastructure, water efficiency, air quality and resource conservation.

This document is intended to provide local government staff and officials with a better understanding of the fundamentals of reach codes including the development, adoption, and implementation processes. Please refer to the companion document, 2022 Reach Code Options and Opportunities, for a discussion of reach code content and opportunities.

- A reach code usually takes the form of a local amendment to the California Building Standards Code (the State Building Code, CCR, Title 24), such as the Building Energy Efficiency Standards (the Energy Code, Title 24, Part 6) or the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen, Title 24, Part 11), but other parts of the State Building Code could be amended as well. A reach code could also be an amendment to other parts of the local code, such as the zoning or public health and safety. This document focuses on amendments to the Energy Code and CALGreen.

Fundamental Concepts

Reach Codes

State law requires reach codes to meet certain conditions, depending upon the part of the State code that is being amended. And although local governments are required by law to adopt and enforce state building standards within their jurisdiction, in California they have authority to establish additional requirements.

Local jurisdictions have the authority to amend the State Building Code under HSC Section 18941.5, with reference to HSC Section 17958.7. Amendments specific to the Energy Code are authorized under Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 25402.1(h)(2). For more information, see the California Building Standards Commission's Guide for Local Amendments of Building Standards.

All amendments to the State Building Code must be supported by findings that they are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions. They must also be filed with the Building Standards Commission. Amendments to the Energy Code must be approved by the California Energy Commission (the Energy Commission).

The State Building Code is updated every three years. The 2022 code cycle is effective from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025. Occasionally, substantiative changes are made in the intervening cycle, which becomes effective 18 months after the start of the current code cycle. In the 2022 code cycle, substantial changes to the EV charging and new embodied carbon requirements became effective in the CALGreen intervening cycle, effective July 1, 2024. The plumbing code was also amended mid-cycle to allow an alternative water pipe sizing methodology.

Typically, jurisdictions will adopt the code and any local amendments several months in advance of the effective date so that the effective date of the local ordinance corresponds with the new State Building Code, but cities and counties may make amendments at any time.

Energy Reach Codes

There are additional requirements for reach codes that affect the Energy Code. Specifically, amendments that affect the allowed quantity of energy use must be supported by findings of cost-effectiveness and may not preempt Federal appliance standards[1], that is, in addition to several other requirements, they may not require the use of appliances that exceed Federal standards. They must also be approved by the Energy Commission.

[1] The scope of Federal preemption is the subject of a recent US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision.

The Energy Commission requires the local agency to make an official determination that the changes are cost-effective and will result in less energy consumption than allowed by state code; it does not provide an approved method, nor does it review a public agency's findings for accuracy. It does require that the evidence used by the local public agency to make their cost-effectiveness findings be submitted to the Energy Commission as part of the application package. The California Codes and Standards Program produces cost-effectiveness studies for most building types to support these findings; visit localenergycodes.com to download the studies.

Cost-effectiveness is measured as a benefit-to-cost ratio. The benefit is the total value of energy savings over a 30-year lifetime and the cost is the initial incremental cost, any additional maintenance, and replacement costs of complying with the amended requirements. A ratio of at least 1.0 is considered cost-effective. That is, the value of the benefits must exceed the cost over the lifecycle of the analysis. The benefits and costs may be measured from either the billpayer's or society's perspective. The billpayer's test simply examines cash flows to the owner/occupant. The societal test uses an estimate of the overall societal savings as the benefit (including factors like the value of emissions reductions and energy grid impacts), instead of just the energy bill savings. This is calculated in the same energy compliance modeling software using a metric developed by the Energy Commission known as Time Dependent Valuation (TDV).[2] TDV considers the different values of energy consumption depending on time of day and day of the year as the strain on grid capacity and the availability of renewable energy sources fluctuates.

Actual costs and benefits will vary for each building. To estimate these, a model building (prototype) is used that reasonably represents typical buildings. The measure installation costs are typically estimated by surveying building contractors. The savings estimates are derived using energy modeling software, such as California Building Energy Code Compliance (CBECC), which is the open source software maintained by the Energy Commission and often used in the permit compliance process. There are also Energy Commission approved privately owned software options.

Amendments to the Energy Code may be prescriptive or performance based. A prescriptive reach code may, for example, require new homes to include attic insulation that meets a higher efficiency rating than the Energy Code requires. Better attic insulation will result in less heat exchange between the unconditioned attic and the conditioned parts of the home. As a result, a home's heating and cooling systems will not have to work as hard to maintain the home's interior temperature setting and will consume less energy. Or, in contrast to this example, a reach code may include a combination of measures such as requiring attic insulation, air sealing at the ceiling and more reflective roofing materials when a building is re-roofed. Whether a single measure, or several, when a reach code requires specific measures, such requirements are referred to as prescriptive requirements.

[2] In the 2025 Energy Code, Long-term System Cost (LSC) will replace the TDV metric.

Like the Energy Code, reach codes often include flexibility for builders to deviate from the prescriptive requirements as long as the building meets similar performance levels. The Energy Code's performance path allows trade-offs between different building components as long as the overall building energy consumption remains within maximum allowable values. Some reach codes may follow the same structure and only include a performance specification requiring the whole building to perform to a certain standard, such as using less energy than the same building that just meets the minimum state code prescriptive requirements.

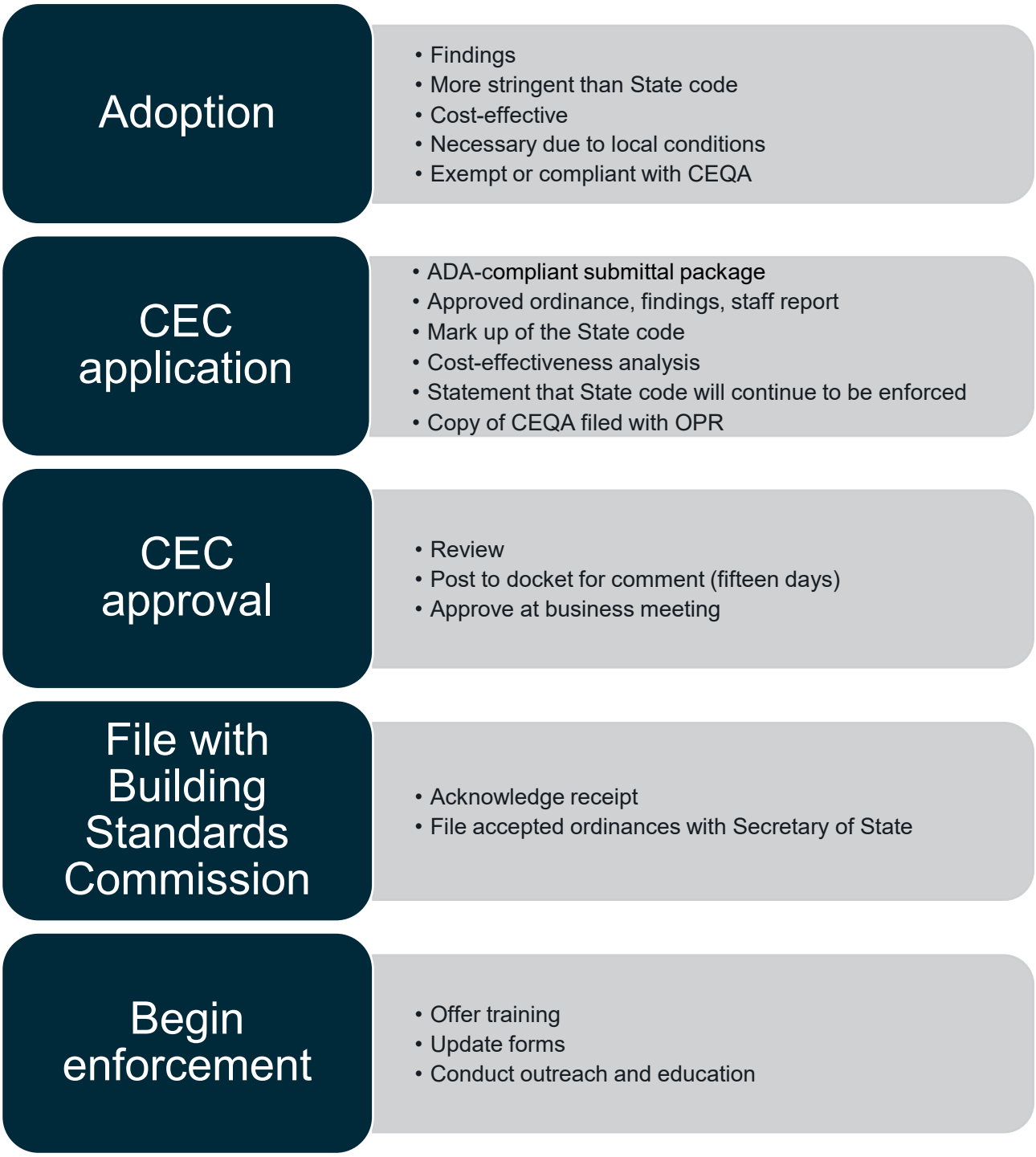
Other Green Reach Codes

Local jurisdictions also have authority to adopt amendments to the State Building Code that are energy related, but do not directly reduce energy use. For example, a local ordinance could require projects in existing buildings to install additional wiring and electrical panel capacity adequate to support a future electric vehicle charging system. Although such a requirement is energy related, it does not result in using any more or less energy and is not, strictly speaking, a building energy efficiency measure. As such, it is not subject to Energy Commission approval and a cost-effectiveness test.

Likewise, amendments to require other "green" measures, for example, additional electric vehicle chargers or graywater systems, are not subject to findings of cost-effectiveness. There are a variety of such measures in the voluntary sections of CALGreen. Jurisdictions may adopt (and modify) the voluntary CALGreen Tier 1 or Tier 2 standards as mandatory requirements. In addition, jurisdictions may wish to amend the building code to require measures not listed in the voluntary "tiers", or amend a different municipal code, or create requirements triggered by an activity other than a building permit. Examples include benchmarking, building performance standards, or emissions-based requirements (as a local ordinance there is some uncertainty on the ability of a jurisdiction to adopt and enforce emissions-based requirements). Please refer to the companion document, 2022 Reach Code Options and Opportunities, for a discussion of reach code content and opportunities.

Figure 1 shows an outline of the process and requirements for an Energy Reach Code, showing the process in five major steps: adoption, CEC application, CEC approval, file with BSC, and ultimately, begin enforcement. Figure 1 provides a high-level summary of the detailed description of the adoption process in Local Government Reach Code Adoption. The process for other green reach codes is simpler but similar.

Figure 1: Energy Reach Code Adoption Process

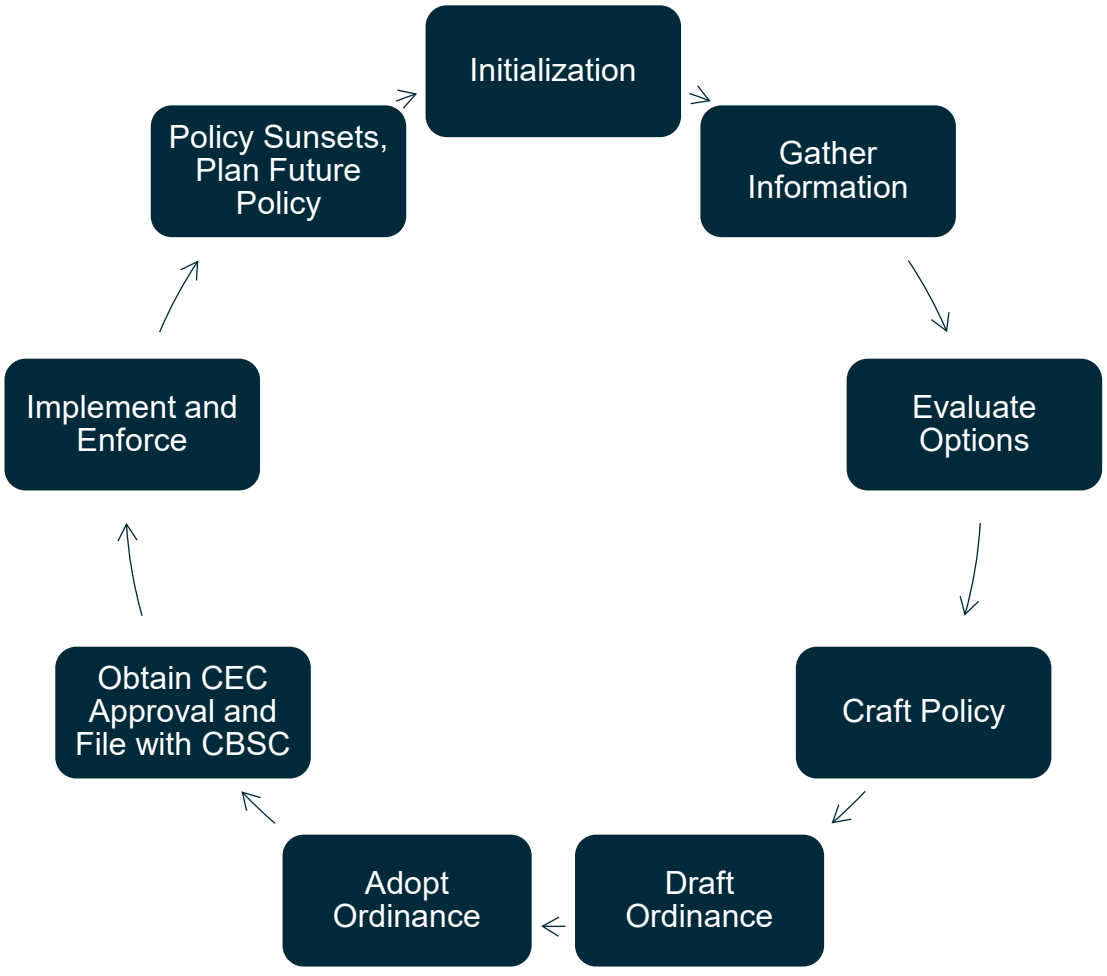


Local Government Reach Code Adoption

The remainder of this document examines the process a typical local government may go through to put a reach code in place. From start to finish, reach code adoption takes anywhere from six to 18 months. The typical process has distinct components from developing a policy, approving an ordinance and preparing to implement it. Broadly, a policy transitions through the stages as shown in Figure 2.

The stages are explained in chronological order and portrayed as distinct steps. In reality, stages often overlap and multiple stages proceed at once. It is common for a policy to encounter an obstacle, and then go back several stages to be re-worked.

Figure 2: Stages of Reach Code Development



Stage 1: Initialization

A decision to consider a reach code is not a decision to adopt a reach code; rather it is a commitment of intent and resources that elevates a reach code from an idea to an activity that may result in an adopted policy. Such a decision may be a formal statement of intent, such as a strategy in an adopted climate action plan, a council resolution, an approved work program, a budget item or any combination of these. It is a vital step to provide legitimacy to the effort and engage essential stakeholders.

Reach codes are often raised in local climate action plans (CAPs) but may be initiated or elevated to active consideration by the governing board, management, staff, and civic leaders, or other advocates. The process usually evolves as information about the opportunity becomes available. Once initiated, staff begin researching the topic, engaging in conversations with peers, attending conferences, and reviewing messaging on the topic. This stage has no distinguishable starting point and includes the planning process for CAPs and other documents. During this stage policy objectives coalesce; plans are developed, and conversations take place about what eventual policies might result.

Reach codes often do not fit into any single local government department; successful adoption requires the collaboration of several departments. Depending on the city or county, reach codes can align variously with the missions of Economic Development, Planning, Development Services, Sustainability, the Energy division, or with many elected officials' policy priorities. Leadership or staff from any of these units can initiate a reach code effort.

When considering the scope of a reach code, it is important to consider the culture of the organization and the community. Cities and counties conceptualize themselves somewhere along the spectrum from leader to follower, like a consumer technology adoption curve. Some strive to be the first in their region to adopt new policies. However, even these governments usually look to leaders from other regions, states, or even countries for examples to follow. Some local governments that still wish to lead may wait until one or more other local governments in the area have pursued a policy, and then move forward with a similar policy before most of their peers do. Others may initiate a policy similar to what most of their peers have done, in an effort to avoid being among the last.

There is no "right" place to be on this spectrum; diversity has practical benefits. New policies can come with unresolved legal questions creating legal exposure that early adopters bear unevenly. Also, it is easier to act more boldly in the face of push back from constituents when other jurisdictions have already adopted similar policies. And finally, being a follower can be an effective way of managing resource constraints.

Stage 2: Gather Information

The information gathering stage typically begins when a decision is made to begin actively exploring ways to use the building code to pursue environmental objectives. A good starting point is to identify and contact other jurisdictions further down the policy development path

and discover those jurisdictions' basic policy designs and the thinking that led to those design choices. It is also important at this stage to reach out laterally to other departments to get a better understanding about how reach codes may affect other internal processes and policy objectives. LocalEnergyCodes.com tracks ordinance adoptions and maintains a searchable list that also includes high-level summaries of the ordinance requirements and links to download the ordinances, and the associated staff reports for additional context.

This is the time to discover what is already covered under the State Building Code, what is possible under a reach code, and what is not -- for example, understanding that the existing code already requires solar for most new buildings, or understanding how a requirement for more efficient appliances may be subject to Federal preemption, or that a cost-effectiveness study is needed to pursue a specific proposal. It is important to identify all these hidden icebergs early when it's easy to change course, rather than learning of them later when they might "sink the ship", causing political embarrassment, delay, or legal issues.

Without this information, it is hard to move forward and recommend one option over all others. Therefore, connections to area experts and trusted peer jurisdictions are important to become informed of these unknown obstacles now and build confidence that there are no others lurking. Adapting policy language, adoption documents, communication materials, training materials, and other work products from those used by a respected jurisdiction can dramatically reduce the time and technical expertise needed throughout the adoption process. Making use of existing policy language offers market actors the additional benefit of consistency across jurisdictions.

Stage 3: Evaluation Options

Once a certain quantity of information on potential policy approaches is gathered and the idea of a reach code still resonates, the process of assessing feasibility, evaluating a set of policy options, producing a recommendation, and making the case for it begins.

Information in some of these areas is rarely quantifiable so the judgments and comparisons are often subjective. As options are analyzed and discussed internally, it is important to consider critical feasibility questions such as: Is the policy legal? Is the policy reasonably enforceable? Are resources for enforcement available? What is the risk that this policy will be subject to costly litigation?

Many other questions that can impact the policy direction and features will be raised later in the policy development process. The distinction here is that these critical feasibility questions at this stage can be deal breakers, or at least, they must be answered before proceeding with a policy recommendation.

There are many criteria by which a policy may be evaluated. In addition to basic feasibility, some of the main considerations include the potential impact of the policy (i.e. emissions reductions, utility bill savings, percentage improvement in energy efficiency), the feasibility, cost and resources required to develop and enforce the policy, cost to residents and businesses to comply with the policy, the amount of expected support and push back from

stakeholders (both internal and external), the degree to which the policy aligns with the CAP and other plans, the policy's fit with political objectives, perceived legal risk, perceived probability of success, and how the policy fits with a jurisdiction's energy and climate-related objectives.

Stage 4: Craft Policy

Once a policy option is prioritized, focused policy development begins. This stage entails thinking through the policy features, how it will be implemented, the schedule for adoption and enforcement, and the resource needs. The policy must be vetted with the involved departments in pursuit of guidance and input on unresolved questions, to build buy-in, and ensure the proposed policy will not interfere with others. This is an iterative process; as issues are dealt with incrementally, the policy is strengthened, specifics take shape, and ideally, consensus builds.

The main goals of this stage are to work through enough detail to be ready to proceed to policy drafting while exposing the policy to as much critical feedback as possible to identify and work through potential issues. Changes to the policy may still occur in later phases, however it is easier and less time consuming to adjust now.

It's common to request review from senior level staff during this stage to confirm the emerging policy reflects the stated priorities and objectives. The conversations that result there often uncover new concerns and questions and lead to further policy development before superiors give the green-light to begin the next stages—engaging stakeholders and drafting the policy.

It is also common during this stage to produce a tentative adoption schedule laying out when the policy may be brought to the governing body for a vote, and likewise, any applicable boards or committees. These timetables are commonly subject to delay; however, they are useful for planning and to help create a sense of urgency to move the policy along.

Stage 5: Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement, as discussed here, includes meetings with individuals, organizations, or groups (i.e. the local USGBC chapter head, or a group of home builders) as well as presentations to advisory bodies (i.e. a city's Sustainability Commission).

Stakeholder engagement occurs concurrently with other stages in the reach code process. It may begin as early as the Initialization stage or as late as the Ordinance Drafting phase. Engagement earlier in the process is often more focused on gathering high-level input and as the policy progresses to adoption, the scope of feedback solicited becomes more and more specific. For example, when consulting stakeholders during the Information Gathering stage, those stakeholders may be invited to suggest policy options consistent with the overall goals of a policy (i.e. reduce building sector emissions). Or during Policy Development, one might share a tentative outline of a policy and ask for feedback on a

narrower set of specific parameters. The reason for this is that receiving negative feedback on the basic policy direction after the policy is already well into development or drafting will potentially disrupt or delay the process. It is wise to engage key stakeholders early, by trying to shape the type of feedback they get at each stage, and by bringing experts into stakeholder meetings to assuage concerns quickly during later stages. It's also important to engage stakeholders that will likely support the policy. While they generally support the policy direction, they may have different specific priorities.

It is important to consider that the engagement process may awaken powerful and well-connected stakeholders or special interests that will lobby elected or senior officials against a policy. To mitigate risk, consider bringing such stakeholders in early and make efforts to win their support. Also warn leaders in advance of potential pushback and try to keep them briefed on the rationale for a policy choice. The ability to anticipate the reactions of certain interest groups is valuable.

It may be compelling to address objections by providing exceptions (exemptions or carve outs). But this process can snowball and can end up with ordinance text that is difficult to interpret and ultimately may not serve the original intent as unforeseen circumstances come into play. It is important to engage the building official throughout the process to see how the jurisdiction handles special cases under different policy areas. See Exceptions in All-Electric Ordinances for a discussion of the authorities of the building official and how jurisdictions have handled exceptions under all-electric ordinances.

Stage 6: Ordinance Drafting

Drafting ordinance language usually begins once the main policy parameters are complete, approval from superiors is given, and collaborating departments have no major objections. The ordinance will typically consist of the following:

- a title
- required findings (if not part of a separate resolution)
- a reference to the section of the local code being amended or adopted
- the proposed text
- a strikeout version of the proposed text clearly showing changes to the State code
- evidence of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- the effective date
- other standard local ordinance clauses (severability, etc.)

Almost inevitably, new issues or questions are raised during the drafting process that require additional development, research, and outreach to specific stakeholders. Questions arising at this stage tend to be the most technical and legalistic, and it may be helpful to look to other jurisdictions that have implemented similar policies or outside technical experts for assistance.

Even when the ordinance is modeled after a template or another jurisdiction's language, it is important to scrutinize the ordinance and seek to understand the rationale. Some of the

issues raised at this point may relate to implementation processes, rather than the ordinance language itself. It is common to begin discussing implementation and developing procedures here or even earlier in the Policy Development stage. Engaging internal permitting and inspection staff early in this process will typically have a big payoff.

It's best to engage the Energy Commission staff prior to introducing an ordinance, especially if the ordinance is a significant departure from what other jurisdictions have adopted. It's worth considering a request to the Energy Commission Reach Code staff to review a draft for consistency with Energy Commission requirements for local amendments and confirm the process for Commission approval.

The ordinance must be reviewed by the jurisdiction's attorney before submission to the governing body.

Stage 7: Adoption

The ordinance, like all ordinances, becomes law only after it is adopted at two separate public meetings. The text may be modified at the first reading before the vote, but the text of the second reading may not be modified without restarting the process. For this reason, it is important that the documents are complete, and that staff are prepared to address any issues that may arise at the first meeting.

Time permitting, an informational report could be submitted to the governing board in advance of the proposed ordinance. This will provide elected officials with a chance to consider the policy and help staff address any potential concerns or questions which may arise during first reading. If serious issues are raised, there may be a need for senior management to work one-on-one with elected officials to resolve these in advance of a vote.

The first reading of the ordinance is accompanied by a staff report and supporting documentation and, often, a presentation. The staff report clearly summarizes background information, the main elements of the proposed ordinance and resolutions, the stakeholder engagement process, and the rationale for the policy, all in language that both elected officials and the general public can understand. Successful reports and presentations are precisely worded, fact-based, persuasive, and hold up to scrutiny.

Public comments are required before an item is considered. This is a good opportunity to ensure there is a balanced set of voices speaking to the issue. Reengaging the parties that participated in the stakeholder process can be a compelling demonstration that the deliberations were thorough and fair.

Stage 8: Obtain Energy Commission Approval and File with Building Standards Commission

Reach codes must be filed with the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) before they are enforceable. In addition, any amendments to the Energy Code must be approved by the Energy Commission before being submitted to the CBSC. If there are no

hiccups the whole process takes roughly 60-90 days. This includes time for Energy Commission staff to review the application, post it for a 15-day public comment period, and for the Commission to formally approve it at one of their monthly business meetings. The application package to the Energy Commission must include the following:

- the adopted ordinance with the vote recorded
- a strikeout version of the ordinance (markup of the State Code)
- the required findings
- the staff report
- copy of CEQA compliance documentation as filed with Governor's Office of Policy and Research (OPR)
- a copy (or link to) findings of cost-effectiveness,
- a cover letter from the building official stating that the ordinance is more stringent than the Energy Code and that the State Energy Code will be enforced

The CBSC filing package must include the same materials, as well as the notice of California Energy Commission (CEC) approval, with the exception of findings of cost-effectiveness and statement from the Building Official regarding the Energy Code.

See CEC Submittal Instructions and CBSC's Guide to Local Amendments of Building Standards for details and templates.

Stage 9: Implement and Enforce Ordinance

Establishing workflows, education, and training are critical to a successful launch. It is necessary to prepare applicants for the new requirements and to have systems and trained permitting staff to process permit applications. Ideally, the reach code coincides with a new code cycle and these activities can be rolled into broader education and outreach efforts. If not, a special effort will need to be made.

To avoid confusion and frustration, this process should begin well in advance of the effective date. It is important to reach applicants as early in their design process as possible so that they can make modifications to comply with the new requirements. Consider developing collateral materials, such as a short summary of the requirements and an application checklist. Get the word out through media contacts, newsletters, listservs, the permitting homepage and notices at the permitting counter. Customizable implementation templates are available at LocalEnergyCodes.com.

Depending upon how rigorous the requirements are, there may be a rush to file applications before the effective date in order to get in under the old code. Ensure the Building Department staff are prepared for a potential rush of applications and establish guidelines to determine what constitutes a complete application versus a placeholder to circumvent the requirements.

Ordinance requirements are usually triggered by the submittal of a building permit application. However, some jurisdictions have extended the effective date for large projects

based on the date entitlements were approved. This can help accommodate projects that have made significant investments in designs and can also help titrate a surge of applications before the effective date.

Work with the implementing departments to review and update workflows, particularly if the requirements affect only certain projects. Review all application forms, checklists, intake screens, and field documents and update as necessary.

It is common for issues to arise early in the implementation process. It is valuable to connect with jurisdictions that have already run into these issues and dealt with them (i.e. building official to building official). It is important for staff responsible for initiating the new policies to work collaboratively with those who will be enforcing them, such as creating checklists or other documents that harmonize with existing compliance processes and procedures. This will help avoid issues that may otherwise result when procedures have not been developed in partnership with implementing staff and departments.

Some of the questions that should be considered for the procedures and staff training include:

- What is the purpose of the requirements?
- How are they different from the State Building Code?
- Which projects are subject to the requirements and which are not?
- Are there any exceptions or exemptions? If so, how are those processed?
- Where does the applicant go to find out what the requirements are?
- If different than the standard process, how are non-responsive applications processed? Are they rejected? If they are accepted does the intake staff instruct them to file an addendum or does the plan checker issue a corrections notice?
- If additional documentation is required, what is needed to demonstrate that the plans comply?
- If different than the standard process, how do field inspectors verify compliance?

Download a customizable training module from LocalEnergyCodes.com.

Stage 10: Sunset and Future Policy Planning

Reach codes that amend the State Building Code sunset when the next code takes effect. For this reason, the process can be seen as an ongoing cycle, in which progressively more stringent reach codes are continuously in place from code cycle to code cycle with no gaps, allowing a local government to fulfill its policy commitment and CAP goals and maintain its position of regional leadership.

The next Energy Code Standards language is usually adopted by the Energy Commission 18 months prior to the effective date. That process is informed by the California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) Codes and Standards Enhancement (CASE) program, which considers new ideas and commissions studies to assess the impacts and feasibility of these

proposals. The Energy Commission considers these proposals and ideas from other sources as it develops new code language and goes through a public rulemaking process.

A similar process is used by the Building Standards Commission, the Energy Commission and the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop language for the next CALGreen cycle.

It is during these rulemaking phases when local jurisdictions can begin exploring opportunities for the next cycle. Statewide and regional agencies will solicit input from local jurisdictions and coordinate amongst each other to prioritize initiatives, conduct supporting analysis and conduct regular informational sessions to keep local jurisdictions current on the process. These information sessions are a good opportunity to prepare for the next cycle. Even after the State adopts the new code, a full analysis of a potential reach code may not be possible until implementation details get worked through, including updating compliance software.

It is important to note that not all reach codes expire when a new code cycle takes effect. Those that do not amend the State Building Code may remain valid beyond the end of a code cycle. Determining which policies may remain into the next code cycle and what procedural steps are needed can be complex, as this is subject to change. Jurisdictions may seek assistance with navigating these questions; guidelines are published by the CBSC.

Ideally, a reach code will take effect at the same time as the new State Building Code. This may necessitate that ordinance language is complete as early as July of the preceding year to accommodate a summer governing board recess, two readings, Energy Commission review and an Energy Commission Business Meeting. The timeline may be relaxed if Energy Commission approval is not required.

Conclusion

Collectively, reach codes can accelerate the transition to better performing buildings and advance the state of the building industry as a whole. More California jurisdictions are using reach codes as a policy mechanism than ever before. This trend is driven largely by local government efforts to meet carbon mitigation goals. Education, financing and incentive programs can all be helpful to support more energy efficient buildings, but reach codes, arguably, can more reliably produce predictable, consistent and large-scale impacts.

However, reach codes are not without restraints. There are limits to what can be required by code, including economic and technical feasibility, implementation practicalities, political resistance, and legal constraints. Successful reach codes must navigate these constraints to produce a policy that results in significant impacts. Some jurisdictions may choose to be pioneers, testing the boundaries and opening new frontiers; others may stick to well-established pathways. And what might be right for one community may not suit another. The important thing is to be deliberate about the process, find what best works for the community and engage and collaborate with others.

Get In Touch

The adoption of reach codes can differentiate jurisdictions as efficiency leaders and help accelerate the adoption of new equipment, technologies, code compliance, and energy savings strategies.

As part of the Statewide Codes & Standards Program, the Reach Codes Subprogram is a resource available to any local jurisdiction located throughout the state of California.

Our experts develop robust toolkits as well as provide specific technical assistance to local jurisdictions (cities and counties) considering adopting energy reach codes. These include cost-effectiveness research and analysis, model ordinance language and other code development and implementation tools, and specific technical assistance throughout the code adoption process.

If you are interested in finding out more about local energy reach codes, the Reach Codes Team stands ready to assist jurisdictions at any stage of a reach code project.

Visit

LocalEnergyCodes.com to access our resources and sign up for newsletters

Contact

info@localenergycodes.com for no-charge assistance from expert Reach Code advisors

Explore

The Cost-Effectiveness Explorer is a free resource to help California local governments and stakeholders develop energy policies for buildings.

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