



California
Climate &
Energy
Collaborative

2021 California Climate & Energy Laws



Local
Government
Commission

Produced by the Local Government Commission

For full context and bill language, please refer to [leginfo.legislature.ca.gov](https://leginfo.ca.gov)

Overview

The [California Climate and Energy Collaborative](#) (CCEC) exists to help local governments achieve their clean energy and climate goals. That's why we create this annual legislative update - to provide an easy-to-digest summary of the climate and energy bills that were passed into law in the 2021 California legislative cycle (formatting has been added to aid in readability). This update focuses on mitigation policies; the [Alliance of Regional Collaboratives for Climate Adaptation](#) (ARCCA) puts out a companion legislative update that focuses on adaptation policies. California's Budget Act 2021 (SB 170) is also the subject of its own, [stand-alone update](#). For more information on the bills mentioned below, click on their number to access the full statutory text.

AB 33 Energy Conservation Assistance Act of 1979: Energy Storage Systems and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure: Native American Tribes - *Asm. Philip Ting (D)*

- » Expands the list of eligible projects under the **California Energy Commission's** (CEC's) Energy Conservation Assistance Account (ECAA) to include installation of energy storage systems and electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure.
- » Also expands the eligible entities who can participate in the ECAA program to include California **Native American tribes**, and establishes a subaccount to track awards and repayment of loans to tribes.
- » Additionally, authorizes an **eligible institution** to bundle multiple projects for the determination of whether the projects will result in overall cost savings during the repayment period of the ECAA loan.

AB 525 Energy: Offshore Wind Generation - *Asm. David Chiu (D), Asm. Jordan Cunningham (R), Asm. Laura Friedman (D)*

- » Requires the **California Energy Commission** (CEC) to establish 2030 and 2045 planning goals for electricity generated by offshore wind (OSW) before June 1, 2022.
- » Additionally requires the CEC, in coordination with the **Public Utilities Commission and State Air Resources Board** to develop a five-part strategic plan for OSW development and to submit the plan to the Natural Resources Agency (NRA) and the Legislature by June 30, 2023.

AB 758 Marks-Roos Local Bond Pooling Act of 1985: Electric Utilities: Rate Reduction Bonds - *Asm. Adrin Nazarian (D)*

- » Expands the types of **Public Owned Utilities (POU)** that can use rate reduction bonds (RRBs) to include POUs that provide electric service regardless of the number of customers they serve.
- » Further expands the types of projects that RRBs can finance to include projects:
 - Used in connection with future operations of a **POU**;
 - For the provision of generation, transmission, or distribution of electrical service; and
 - For any other utility purpose designated a "utility project" by a **POU**.
- » Provides that eligible costs RRBs can finance include the costs of both tangible and intangible property.

- » Clarifies that the **California Pollution Control Financing Authority** (CPCFA) must submit its report to the Legislature to relevant policy committees with jurisdiction over energy and public utilities.
- » Extends the sunset date for the authorization to issue RRBs from December 31, 2026, to December 31, 2036.

AB 843 California Renewables Portfolio Standards Program: Renewable Feed-in Tariff: Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff Program: Community Choice Aggregators - *Asm. Cecilia M. Aguiar-Curry (D)*

- » Provides that the renewable FIT would apply to a qualifying electric generation facility that is developed to sell electricity to the electrical corporation or, for a bioenergy electric generation facility, to an electrical corporation or a **Community Choice Aggregators** (CCA) within the electrical corporation's service territory.
- » Authorizes a **CCA** to submit eligible bioenergy projects for cost recovery from electric utility customers, pursuant to the BioMAT program, if open capacity exists within the 250 MW-BioMAT program limit, as specified.
- » Requires, additionally, that every kWh of electricity purchased from a bioenergy electric generation facility count toward both the **CCA's** renewables portfolio standard procurement requirements and the bioenergy project procurement requirements of the electrical corporation whose service territory encompasses the **CCA**, and that the physical generating capacity of a bioenergy electric generation facility count toward the **CCA's** resource adequacy requirements.

AB 970 Planning and Zoning: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Permit Application: Approval - *Asm. Kevin McCarty (D), Asm. David Chiu (D)*

- » Establishes specific time frames in which **local agencies** must approve permits for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.
- » Specifies that provisions apply to all cities, including charter cities.
- » Clarifies that existing law requiring cities to administratively approve, and create an expedited, streamlined permitting process for applications to install EV charging stations applies to **charter cities**.
- » Provide longer time periods for applications to install EV charging stations if the application is for more than 25 EV charging stations at a single site, as follows:
 - The application will be deemed complete 10 business days after the application is submitted, as specified.
 - The application will be deemed approved 40 days after the application is deemed complete, as specified.

AB 1124 Solar Energy Systems - *Asm. Laura Friedman (D)*

- » Revises the definition of "**solar energy system**" as that term is used for the purpose of local permitting of such systems, including the allowable fees a local agency may charge, and clarifies the permit fees local agencies may charge for commercial and residential solar energy systems.

- » Revises the definition of “**solar energy system**” to clarify that it must be designed to serve one utility retail customer on the same property, more than one utility retail customer on the same property, one utility retail customer on the same, adjacent, or contiguous properties, or more than one utility retail customer on the same, adjacent or contiguous properties, and not be designed for procurement of electricity by an electric utility, as specified.
- » Clarifies that a structural design feature of a solar energy system includes elevated solar support structures, including the aboveground superstructure and associated foundation elements that support the solar collectors or other solar energy devices, as specified.
- » Clarifies that a residential permit fee applies to an application for a solar energy system that is installed on the property of a **single- or two-family dwelling**.
- » Clarifies that a commercial permit fee applies to an application for a commercial solar energy system that includes, but is not limited to, a solar energy system that is installed on the property of **multifamily housing** that has more than two family dwellings.
- » Clarifies that nothing in this bill or existing law governing permit fees for solar energy systems precludes a **city, county, city and county, or charter city** from conducting a plan check to confirm the safety of a solar energy system pursuant to specified existing law and the California Building Standards Code.

SB 68 Building Electrification and Electric Vehicle Charging - *Sen. Josh Becker (D)*

- » Requires the **California Energy Commission** (CEC) to develop and publish guidance on best practices for the transition to electric equipment and appliances, and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging equipment. This is intended to help reduce barriers for **building owners**, the **construction industry**, and **local governments**.
- » Authorizes awarding of money from the existing Electric Program Investment Charge program, funded by surcharges on energy ratepayer utility bills, for technological advancements that reduce the costs of electrifying building-related applications.

SB 372 Medium- and Heavy-Duty Fleet Purchasing Assistance Program: Zero-Emission Vehicles - *Sen. Connie M. Leyva (D)*

- » Requires the **California Pollution Control Financing Authority** (CPCFA) to establish a program to make financing tools and non-financial supports available to the **operators of medium- and heavy-duty vehicle fleets** by January 1, 2023, to enable their fleets to transition to zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs).

SB 423 Energy: Firm Zero-Carbon Resources - *Sen. Henry I. Stern (D)*

- » Requires the **California Energy Commission** (CEC) to submit to the Legislature an assessment by December 31, 2023, of firm zero-carbon resources that support a clean, reliable, and resilient electrical grid and will help achieve the existing statutory goal of ensuring renewable energy and zero-carbon resources supply 100% of all retail sales of electricity to California customers by December 31, 2045.

SB 437 Local Publicly Owned Electric Utility: IRP and Transportation Electrification - *Sen. Bob Wieckowski (D)*

- » Requires each large **publicly owned electric utility** (POU) to provide details of its electric service rate design to support transportation electrification.

- » Any **POU** with an annual electrical demand exceeding 700 gigawatt-hours (GWh) must provide in its integrated resource plan (IRP):
 - Details of the **POU's** rate design that supports transportation electrification for light-, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to the extent feasible.
 - Existing or planned incentives to promote transportation electrification.
 - Efforts to educate **customers of incentives** and decision-making tools that can help customers predict the cost of electricity for their vehicles.

SB 500 Autonomous Vehicles: Zero Emissions - *Sen. Dave Min (D)*

- » Commencing January 1, 2030, and to the extent authorized by federal law, will prohibit the operation of certain new autonomous vehicles that are not zero-emission vehicles, as defined. Would also prohibit the **DMV** from commencing rulemaking for the adoption of regulations implementing this provision until January 1, 2027.

SB 533 Electrical Corporations: Wildfire Mitigation Plans: Deenergization Events - *Sen. Henry I. Stern (D)*

- » Requires **electrical corporations** to identify circuits that have frequently been de-energized to mitigate the risk of wildfire and the measures taken (or planned to be taken) to reduce the need for future de-energization of those circuits, and the impact of doing so.

SB 589 Air Pollution: Alternative Vehicles and Vehicle Infrastructure - *Sen. Ben Hueso (D)*

- » Requires the **California Energy Commission** (CEC) to evaluate the workforce development and training resources needed to meet the state's ZEV deployment goals as part of the CEC's regular assessment of the resources needed to meet ZEV transportation goals.
- » Expands the types of projects eligible for funding from the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program (ARFVTP) to include projects that develop in-state supply chains and the workforce for raw materials and components needed for zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) manufacturing.
- » Expands the groups the **CEC** must consult as part of ARFVTP workforce development efforts to include the **California Conservation Corps, local Conservation Corps, the California Mobility Center, and the California Community Colleges**.

SB 596 Greenhouse Gases: Cement Sector: Net-Zero Emissions Strategy - *Sen. Josh Becker (D)*

- » Requires the **California Air Resources Board** (ARB), by July 1, 2023, to develop a comprehensive strategy for the state's **cement sector** to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions no later than December 31, 2045.
- » Makes implementation of the strategy by **ARB** contingent on funding by the Legislature.
- » Requires **ARB** to establish interim targets for GHG reductions with the goal of reducing GHG intensity of cement used in the state to 40% below the 2019 average by December 2035.