Existing Building Reach Codes

Cost-Effective Improvements to Buildings

A moderated panel with the Cities of
San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz

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Moderated by Marianne Olson

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Reach codes are locally adopted amendments to the building code that encourage energy efficiency and decarbonization

- Reach codes comply with federal pre-emption laws and the Berkeley ruling by allowing gas appliances
- Reach codes are supported by Statewide cost studies
- Reach codes have common model code language that can be enacted statewide, though there is some customization that's needed by climate zone

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Reach Code Cost Effectiveness

Reach codes that decrease a building's energy use **must demonstrate that they are cost-effective** for the California Energy Commission to approve them. Most reach codes are cost-effective because they both **generate energy bill savings** and **decrease statewide grid demand and climate change impacts**.

Reach codes for electric vehicle infrastructure or electric readiness **do not require** a cost effectiveness study.

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Existing building reach codes incorporate cost-saving improvements to planned work:

Cooling Upgrades

Planned Electrical Work

Large Remodels

AB130 paused *most* but not *all* residential building code amendments

Reach codes for residential buildings now must meet one of these two conditions:

- The reach code is **"substantially equivalent"** to a previously adopted reach code **in effect before September 30, 2025**.
- The reach code **supports policy goals** outlined in a **general plan** that was **adopted before June 10, 2025**.

The California Building Standards commission **evaluates all local code amendments**, including reach codes for the two conditions.

- This has **significantly increased the workload** of the Commission while staffing levels have remained steady.
- This led to **new and unexpected delays** between local ordinance adoptions and Commission determinations for reach codes.

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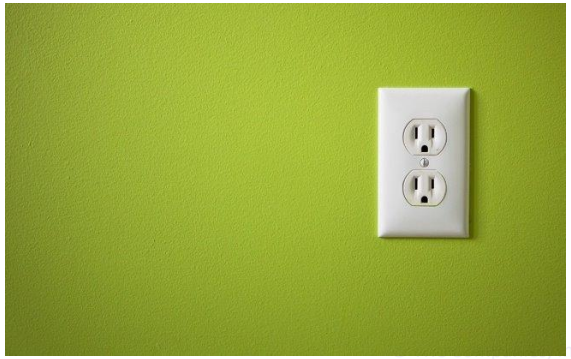
These 4 existing building reach codes are available to adopt today

Single Family			Nonresidential
Two-Way AC	Electric Readiness	FlexPath	Two Way AC
Adds efficiency measures to air conditioning unit installations. Heat pump installations do not require additional efficiency measures. Adopted by San Mateo	Adds conduit or wiring to electrical work that is within 3 feet of gas appliances. Adopted by San Mateo	Adds multiple energy improvement options to substantial additions or alterations. Adopted by Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo & San Mateo	Adds efficiency measures to air conditioning unit installations. Heat pump installations do not require additional efficiency measures. Adopted by Santa Cruz & San Mateo



Let’s hear from the panelists

Please raise your hand to ask for clarification or follow ups

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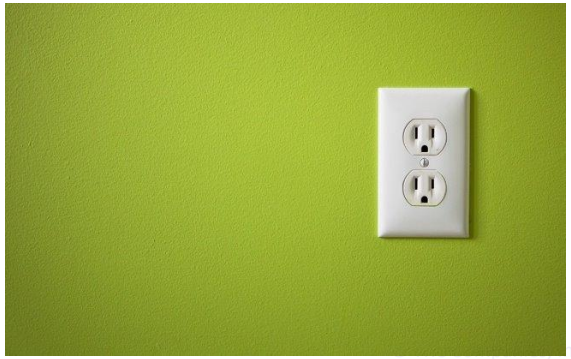

Let’s hear from the audience

Please raise your hand to ask your question

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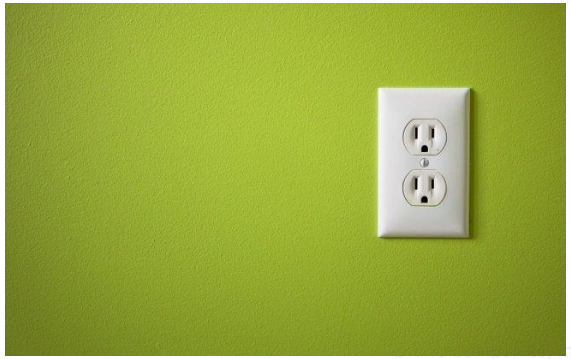

Thank You

Please reach out to keep the conversation going:

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