REACH CODE NEWS BRIEF: MARCH 2026

OPPORTUNITIES AND RESOURCES THIS SPRING!

INAUGURAL HEAT PUMP WEEK COMING IN APRIL!

To help accelerate adoption and meet the state's goal of installing six million heat pumps by 2030, the California Heat Pump Partnership (CAHPP) is hosting the first-ever statewide Heat Pump Week from April 11-19, 2026.

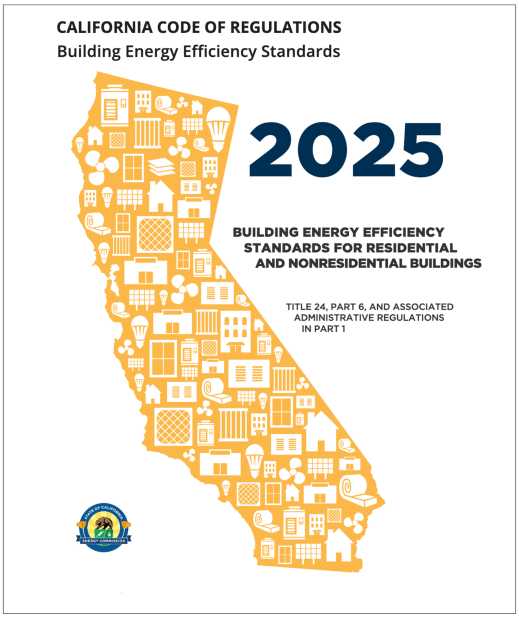
Heat Pump Week features a wide range of activities, including marquee events, contractor celebrations, and grass roots enthusiasm all aimed at raising awareness of heat pumps. Three convenings will be held:

- April 13: Bay Area convening centered on the energy transition
- April 17: Sacramento convening with policy leadership focus
- April 18: Los Angeles convening focused on rebuilding

For local homeowners and renters, Heat Pump Week will offer opportunities to connect directly with qualified contractors, explore all-electric appliances for space and water heating, learn about available incentives and rebates, and more. For contractors, the event will include hands-on training and product demonstrations, tools and resources

to grow their businesses, and opportunities to showcase their expertise to customers actively seeking heat pump installations. Manufacturers and builders will have the chance to demonstrate their products, host open houses, and provide training.

For complete details, visit the Heat Pump Week website!



NEW RESTRUCTURED 2025 ENERGY CODE NOW AVAILABLE!

The California Energy Commission (CEC) has recently published the Restructured 2025 Energy Code. This resource was developed by the CEC in response to public feedback suggesting that aligning the structure of the Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) with other parts of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24) would improve usability and navigation.

This informational resource reorganizes the adopted regulatory language to group related requirements together and renumbers sections for easier navigation. While minor editorial changes were made to support the new format, these changes do not affect any regulatory requirements.

This document is **not** an official regulatory document; it is being provided as a public resource to gather feedback that may inform future Energy Code updates. For compliance and enforcement, always refer to the formally adopted code.

The Commission encourages comments on this resource until the deadline of May 26, 2026. Comments may be submitted to Docket #24-BSTD-05.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 8: Inland Empire Sustainability Summit, Riverside Convention Center

April 8: California Energy Commission: Business Meeting

April 8-15: LA Climate Week

April 9: I-REN C&S Training: 2025 Energy Code Restructured

April 11-19: California Heat Pump Partnership: Heat Pump Week

April 13: California Climate Policy Summit 2026, Sacramento

April 15: BayREN C&S Training: Introduction to CALGreen

April 15: USGBC-CA training: Designing Water Resilient Buildings

April 18-26: SF Climate Week

April 21: CCR-REN training: Hot Climates: Best Practices for Residential Energy Compliance

April 22: Earth Day

NEW THIS MONTH!

SINGLE FAMILY NEW CONSTRUCTION COST EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS NOW AVAILABLE!

The Local Energy Codes team recently presented results of its cost effectiveness analysis in a webinar on March 12, 2026.

The analysis utilized a single family home prototype of one representative 2,400 square foot home and a detached ADU. The presenters offered the results of analysis for efficiency measures such as added attic insulation with duct burial, high efficiency windows, reduced air infiltration, compact hot water distribution, and – for ADUs only – a variable capacity heat pump, across all 16 California climate zones.

This analysis used two different metrics to assess the cost-effectiveness of the proposed upgrades. Both methodologies require estimating and quantifying the incremental costs and energy savings associated with each energy efficiency measure over a 30-year analysis period. On-Bill cost-effectiveness is a customer-based lifecycle cost (LCC) approach that values energy based upon estimated site energy usage and customer utility bill savings using current electricity and natural gas utility tariffs. Long-term Systemwide Cost (LSC) is the California Energy Commission’s LCC methodology for the 2025 code cycle (previously referred to as Time Dependent Valuation (TDV)), which is intended to capture the long-term projected cost of energy including costs for providing energy during peak periods of demand, carbon emissions, and grid transmission and distribution impacts.

Measures were analyzed in terms of a single margin: Efficiency LSC (one of three compliance metrics used in the 2025 Code). The focus on this metric is due to changes in the 2025 code relative to the previous 2022 code, specifically, redefined compliance metrics and the dual heat pump baseline which prescriptively requires heat pumps for both space conditioning and water heating in all climate zones. The single family (non-ADU) measures were combined into one measure package for most climate zones (Climate Zones 1-5, 11-14, and 16).

Presenters noted that each measure/package was both On-Bill and 2025 LSC cost-effective in all IOU-served climate zones; the portions of climate zones served by POUs (CPAU and SMUD), however, are not On-Bill cost-effective.

With regard to the results of the ADU analysis, (representing the variable capacity heat pump (VCHP) measure only, there was highly favorable cost-effectiveness in terms of both On-Bill and 2025 LSC in all climate zones (again, specifically for IOU-served territories). This was due in large part to the incremental cost of installing a ductless VCHP instead of the prescriptively required ducted heat pump.

The preliminary report and dataset are currently available on the Local Energy Codes website. The final report is anticipated by the end of April. The data will be incorporated into the Cost Effectiveness Explorer as well.

The webinar materials and recording are available here.

ENERGY CODE ACE CONFERENCE: REACH CODES PATHWAYS SESSION RECAP

The Reach Codes Pathways session at the 2026 Energy Code Ace Conference provided an overview of how local jurisdictions across California are pushing beyond statewide building standards to advance climate and energy goals.

The presentation – featuring Peter Roquemore (Sustainability Analyst, City of Santa Monica), Christine Shen (Senior Planner, City of West Hollywood), and Bo White (Principal Project Engineer, NegaWatt Consulting) – highlighted how jurisdictions are advancing climate goals through both established and emerging policy pathways.

Session Overview

The session outlined how jurisdictions are navigating an increasingly complex and shifting policy landscape. Opportunities to adopt reach codes have been impacted by updates to the 2025 state codes, which have narrowed the gap between baseline requirements and local amendments. Recent legislation, including California AB 130, adds further nuance – particularly with provisions that may limit or reshape residential reach code adoption while leaving nonresidential ordinances untouched. Together, these dynamics are pushing jurisdictions to think more strategically about how to structure and implement local climate policies.

The speakers highlighted key “standard pathways” for reach codes, including air conditioning to heat pump (AC to HP) requirements, FlexPath options, energy performance standards, electric vehicle infrastructure, cool roofs, and embodied carbon reductions. These approaches provide flexible frameworks for reducing emissions in new and existing buildings while aligning with statewide goals.

In parallel, “alternative pathways” are gaining traction. These include building performance standards (BPS), air quality ordinances, and enforcement of regional air district rules. BPS policies continue to be adopted across the U.S., supported by an expanding set of tools and resources that help jurisdictions design and implement effective programs.

Case Studies

Case studies outlined by Peter Roquemore and Christine Shen illustrated some of these strategies in practice. In Santa Monica, the city’s Low Carbon Concrete Reach Code aligns its requirements with CALGreen Tier 2 compliance limits and applies to nonresidential buildings over 100,000 square feet and schools over 50,000 square feet. With over 150 projects subject to the policy, it offers a straightforward approach with significant emissions reductions compared to standard concrete, though implementation challenges remain.

In West Hollywood, the city's recently adopted Equitable Building Performance Standards target buildings over 20,000 square feet – just 6% of the city's building stock, but a large share of emissions – as part of a broader goal to electrify 80% of the city's buildings by 2035. The policy includes an alternative compliance pathway through Building Performance Action Plans and emphasizes equity through improved indoor conditions and tenant protections.

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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