




**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Community Services
Department No.: 057
For Agenda Of: March 18, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department 
Director Jesús Armas, Community Services Director, (805) 568-2467
Contact Info: Garrett Wong, Climate Program Manager, (805) 390-2983

SUBJECT: Pause Local Energy Performance Code Development

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Planning & Development

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve staff recommendation to pause development of the energy performance reach code; and
- b) Determine that the recommended action does not constitute a project subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15306, as the actions only involve information gathering.

Summary Text:

Staff recommend that the Board pause the development of a local energy ordinance (reach code) due to the upcoming changes to the 2025 California Building and Energy Code.

On October 4, 2022, the Board directed staff to pursue development of an ordinance that regulates fuel gas infrastructure in new construction, additions, and major alterations, based on health and safety concerns and climatic, geological, and topographical conditions.

Pause Local Energy Performance Reach Code Development
March 18, 2025
Page 2 of 3

On April 17, 2023, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a lower court decision that upheld the City of Berkeley's local ordinance to restrict fuel gas infrastructure in new construction. This decision deemed this approach to be pre-emptive of Federal regulations.

On September 17, 2024, the Board directed staff to pursue development of an energy reach code to encourage all-electric construction.

Background:

The State 2025 Building and Energy Code will be effective January 1, 2026. This code gets closer to all-electric buildings and would effectively do more than the reach code since all-electric (heat pump) technology is being required rather than preferred/encouraged in single-family homes. Attachment A contains a summary of Code changes, and Attachment B is a fact sheet published by the California Energy Commission (CEC). Policy development and internal coordination issues delayed the reach code development and adoption timeline. Moreover, were a reach code be approved by the County, it would need to be submitted to the CEC for its approval. As a result, staff project that the County would have 6 months, at best, to implement the local energy code with a limited benefit before the new State code comes into effect.

Staff recognize that implementing a standalone energy reach code for a brief period would increase cost and time to building application review and permit approvals. Establishing new processes and procedures (for a limited implementation period) would increase administrative burden and cost on existing resources and increase workload for the Building Safety Division. Consequently, staff recommend pausing the development and adoption of a reach code.

Given the forthcoming changes to the State Building and Energy Code (2025 Code), the local governments have different opportunities to develop and adopt policies to advance low or no-carbon buildings.

Regional Collaboration

Since 2022, staff have collaborated with the cities of Carpinteria, Goleta and Santa Barbara to develop reach code policies, leverage technical assistance, coordinate outreach activities and provide general support to one other. Staff will continue to confer with interested jurisdictions to identify opportunities to collaborate in policy development and implementation and ensure regional consistency as much as possible

Performance Measure:

N/A

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: N/A

Special Instructions:

N/A

Pause Local Energy Performance Reach Code Development
March 18, 2025
Page 3 of 3

Attachments:

- A. Summary of Changes to 2025 California Energy Code
- B. 2025 California Energy Code Fact Sheet

Authored by:

Garrett Wong, Climate Program Manager