CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN ENERGY EFFICIENCY OPPORTUNITY:

Ramping Up Success to Save Billions and Meet Climate Goals







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We would like to thank everyone for their time reviewing this report.

It should be noted, though, that the external reviews do not indicate authorship or a full endorsement of the report and its findings.

Please Note: The Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (Senate Bill 350), which was signed into law on October 8, 2015, included direction on the data to be used to determine the estimate of energy savings necessary to meet the 2030 energy efficiency goals. This report was updated accordingly.

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Executive Summary

California's dedication to implementing energy-saving programs, building codes, and appliance standards over the past 40 years has saved Californians nearly \$90 billion on their energy bills through 2013—with average residential electricity bills that are \$240 less than in other states—and reduced electricity demand by more than 15,500 megawatts (MW), equivalent to the output from more than 30 large power plants.

This report, a five-year update of California's energy efficiency progress, shows California is ahead of schedule to reach its 32,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh) goal of using efficiency to cut emissions by 2020 and help the state meet its total pollution reduction target under the landmark Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32), but a significant ramp-up is needed to meet California's long-term climate and energy goals.²

Since the plan for implementing AB 32 was launched in 2008, California has saved enough electricity to cut its annual climate-warming greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 8 million metric tons, equivalent to the annual pollution from nearly 2 million cars. Eliminating this electricity generation also avoids hundreds of tons of sulfur

oxide gases and nitrogen oxides, pollutants that contribute to health issues such as coughing, wheezing, and decreased lung function.⁴

Based on the state's energy-saving achievements as of 2013 (the most recent complete data set available), NRDC estimates that efficiency could save Californians an additional \$2 billion on their utility bills through 2015—\$85 for the average household in this year alone—while avoiding another 10,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity, 270 million therms (MMth) of natural gas, and the associated pollution. These savings are enough to serve over 1.5 million households for electricity and more than 500,000 households for natural gas for one year; together avoiding the carbon dioxide pollution equivalent to annual emissions from more than 1.5 million cars.

Figure ES-1: Benefits from California's Investment in Energy Efficiency

DECREASES POLLUTION

Avoided 30

LARGE POWER PLANTS since 1970s, II more expected to be avoided over the next decade



Cuts MILLIONS OF TONS OF POLLUTANTS contributing to asthma, other ills

CUTS ENERGY WASTE

 Saved enough electricity since 2003 to power
 MORE THAN HALF OF CALIFORNIA'S HOMES FOR ONE YEAR



- Met about I/5 of the state's electricity need in 20I3
- Helped keep per capita
 electricity use flat vs.
 50% increase in rest of U.S.
 (since 1970s)

SAVES CALIFORNIANS MONEY

- Efficiency programs saved \$12 billion after costs (2003-2013)
- Research projects yielded \$446 for every \$1 invested
- Newest building codes to save \$6,000 per house

Codes and standards saved a total of \$75 billion (since 1970s)

CREATES JOBS. SPURS ECONOMY

- Efficiency jobs grew I5% compared to 2% economy-wide (2002–2012)
- California produces 2x benefit for every unit of electricity compared to the rest of U.S.



HELPS LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS

 Low-income efficiency programs served almost

3 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS

(since 2003)

Saved enough electricity to power 90,000 HOMES and enough natural gas for nearly 80,000 HOMES

HELPS MEET CLIMATE GOALS

► Slashed 30 MILLION metric tons of CO₂ pollution, equal to annual emissions of 6 MILLION cars (since 2003)



Cuts one of the largest sources of California's greenhouse gas emissions

STRONG EFFICIENCY POLICIES SAVE **CALIFORNIANS MONEY AND ENERGY**

California's 2003 Energy Action Plan requires that utilities make energy efficiency the top priority to meet customer needs before turning to other sources like renewable energy and natural gas.⁵ Since then, the state's efficiency efforts have cut total electricity demand by nearly onefifth, saved nearly 50,000 GWh of electricity (equivalent to the electricity needed to power over half of California's households in 2013), and saved more than 1,000 MMth of natural gas. These efficiency savings have avoided carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to the annual emissions from more than 6 million cars.6,7

Thanks in part to California's strong energy and climate policies, annual household electric bills are on average 18 percent below the rest of the nation.8 In addition to avoiding the amount of power needed from more than 10 large plants since 2003 thanks to efficiency programs alone, 9 California is expected to avoid another 11 large (500 MW) power plants' worth of electricity demand by 2025 as a result of future programs, codes, and standards.10

The more than \$8 billion funded by customer bills that utilities and other efficiency program administrators have invested in cutting energy waste since 2003 yielded the following benefits as of 2013 (the most recent complete data set available):

- Electricity savings of 30,000 GWh in the investor-owned utilities' (IOU) territory (serving 75 percent of the state),11 equivalent to the power needed to serve more than 4 million California homes for one year;¹²
- Natural gas savings in the same area of 500 MMth, equal to the annual consumption of 1 million California households;13
- Electricity savings of 3,400 GWh in the publicly owned utilities' (POU) territory (serving the remaining 25 percent of the state), enough to avoid carbon dioxide emissions equal to the annual pollution from more than 370,000 cars;14 and
- Electricity savings of 600 GWh from low-income programs statewide, lowering electricity usage enough to power 90,000 homes for one year, and avoiding 35 MMth, enough natural gas to serve nearly 80,000 California homes for one year.15

In 2013, alone:

Investment in efficiency programs surpassed \$30 per capita.16 This is more than twice the average spending of \$12 per capita across the country;17

- All three electric IOUs' electricity savings exceeded 1 percent of electricity sales (a metric that evaluates a utility's overall effort in developing and implementing efficiency programs), along with one large POU and a number of mid-sized and small POUs;18 and
- The IOUs (electric and natural gas) and POUs (electric) had average investments in energy efficiency programs that were approximately 2 percent of their total revenue (a metric that indicates a utility's effort to invest in energy efficiency).19

In addition to efficiency programs, the state continues to support research, development, and demonstration (RD&D), as well as advancing buildings codes and equipment standards. These efforts have led to:

- More than 10,000 GWh in electricity savings since 2003 from the state's appliance efficiency standards, enough to serve nearly 2 million households for one year.20
- Homeowner savings of \$6,000 over 30 years for a house constructed in accordance with the 2013 building energy efficiency code compared with similar houses built to the previous energy code.21
- Nearly \$450 of benefit for every \$1 of public funding invested in projects.²²

Efficiency also supports a healthy economy. In fact, California spends less of its gross domestic product on electricity to power its homes and businesses than states with comparable populations and economies, and is nearly twice as productive per unit of electricity consumed.²³ If California were as inefficient as Texas, Californians would be spending \$9.5 billion more on electricity each year and \$24 billion more if the state were as inefficient as Florida.²⁴

Meanwhile, efficiency employment grew by 15 percent from 2002 to 2012²⁵ and more than 300,000 positions, or nearly 70 percent of California's green economy jobs, are now related to improving energy efficiency in buildings alone.26

LAUNCHING CALIFORNIA TO THE NEXT LEVEL

The urgent threat of climate change makes it incumbent upon the Golden State to substantially ramp up efficiency efforts to cut emissions and meet the state's long-term energy and climate goals. Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. has called for a doubling of current energy efficiency savings and a 40 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by 2030. This will help put the state on a path to meet the goal Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger established in his 2005 Executive Order to cut emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. California is ahead of schedule to meet the amount of efficiency savings projected in the state's blueprint to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. But without a significant acceleration, the current trajectory would fall short of Governor Brown's goal to double efficiency savings by 2030. Based on the most current projections for efficiency savings, doubling them would require that over the next 15 years, customer-funded efficiency programs for both investor-owned and publicly owned utility territories, as well as new minimum energy standards for buildings and appliances, save nearly 89,000 GWh (enough to reduce our total statewide electricity needs in 2030 by 26 percent), and 1,377 MMth (enough to meet more than 10 percent of the state's 2030 natural gas demand).27

Thanks in part to the state's great success, including a strong policy foundation and network of energy efficiency professionals, California is planning to significantly exceed its power plant emissions reduction requirements under the federal Clean Power Plan. But to succeed at reaching the ambitious goal to double its efficiency savings, the state must improve upon and expand policies to address a variety of issues that are limiting opportunities to capture substantial energy savings. For example, efficiency efforts are not always coordinated statewide, a number of policy rules that prevent administrators and implementers from capturing cost-effective savings need to be changed, commission staff capacity is frequently limited, and/ or tasks may not be prioritized or are too numerous to complete in a timely manner.

Fortunately, many of the issues that could hamper California's future efficiency success are already being addressed in formal proceedings or by informal working groups at the state energy and climate agencies.

This report offers recommendations for how state agencies, decision makers, and stakeholders can collaboratively move forward to achieve California's efficiency and climate goals. To aid in this effort, the Legislature should codify the state's post-2020 energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction goals to provide a long-term framework for updating efficiency policies. However,

most of the responsibility for implementing the following recommendations falls on the energy and climate agencies, which should:

- Provide strategic direction on how to double savings from efficiency;
- Establish a statewide collaborative group to inform ongoing efficiency planning and implementation;
- Prioritize the challenges to resolve;
- Align policies and processes with climate and efficiency goals;
- Set efficiency rules to enable market transformation;
- Expand the use of efficiency to avoid upgrading or adding new power generation;
- Adopt a process for ongoing program planning and oversight;
- Ensure low- and moderate- income customers have access to high-quality energy-saving opportunities;
- Include workforce strategies to help scale up efficiency;
- Accelerate implementation of building codes and appliance standards;
- Foster opportunities to capture greater efficiency; and
- Improve access to and use of energy data.

Chapter 1 of this report sets the context for energy efficiency and its critical role in meeting California's climate goals. Chapter 2 highlights California's progress and the direct benefits efficiency has yielded for customers and the economy, including contributing to a strong and growing workforce. Chapter 3 describes California's smart foundational efficiency policies and associated benefits, and Chapter 4 provides detailed, action-oriented recommendations to align the state's policy rules with its climate goals to enable more efficiency to be captured. In sum, this report examines the history, benefits, current opportunities, and potential for more energy efficiency with policy improvements and leadership.

ENDNOTES

Executive Summary

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