
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 39
Author: Zbur (D), et al.
Amended: 9/4/25 in Senate
Vote: 21

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE: 5-2, 7/2/25
AYES: Durazo, Arreguín, Cabaldon, Laird, Wiener
NOES: Choi, Seyarto

SENATE ENERGY, U. & C. COMMITTEE: 12-4, 7/15/25
AYES: Becker, Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Caballero, Gonzalez, Hurtado, Limón,
McNerney, Rubio, Stern, Wahab
NOES: Ochoa Bogh, Dahle, Grove, Strickland
NO VOTE RECORDED: Ashby

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-10, 6/3/25 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: General plans: Local Electrification Planning Act

SOURCE: Building Decarbonization Coalition
CALSTART

DIGEST: This bill enacts the Local Electrification Planning Act, which requires cities and counties to establish plans for decarbonization, as specified.

Senate Floor Amendments of 9/4/25 add coauthors.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Requires every county and city to adopt a general plan with seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and

safety. General plans must also either include an eighth element on environmental justice, or incorporate environmental justice concerns throughout the other elements.

- 2) Requires cities' and counties' major land use decisions—including zoning ordinances and development permitting—to be consistent with their general plans.
- 3) Requires California to reduce statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to a level 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, as provided by SB 32 (Pavley, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2016).
- 4) Establishes building standards that new construction must meet, including standards for energy efficiency.

This bill:

- 1) Establishes the Local Electrification Planning Act and requires each city, county, or city and county, on or after January 1, 2027, but no later than January 1, 2030, to prepare and adopt a specified plan, or integrate a plan in the next adoption or revision of the general plan, that includes locally based goals, objectives, policies, and feasible implementation measures that include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Identification of opportunities to expand electric vehicle (EV) charging and other zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) fueling infrastructure (for residents and businesses, at residential, retail, and commercial lots and public streets).
 - b) Identification of strategies for public electrification and decarbonization of new and existing buildings (to the extent not prohibited by federal or state law).
 - c) Identification of opportunities to expand zero-emission and renewable distributed energy resources to increase clean energy generation and local energy reliability.
 - d) Identification where infrastructure may be needed to meet existing and projected needs of medium- and heavy-duty ZEV fleets.
 - e) Identification of areas where grid infrastructure upgrades are needed to meet the needs, in coordination with corresponding local publicly owned electric

utilities, electrical corporations, and, if applicable, other corresponding load-serving entities.

- f) Policies that meet the needs of disadvantaged communities and low-income households, and small businesses for equitable investments in zero-emission technology.
- 2) Authorizes a city, county, or city and county to designate a previously adopted similar plan that meets the above-described requirements, as specified.
- 3) Exempts a city, county, or city and county, with a population of 75,000 or less from the requirements of this bill.
- 4) Deems a plan adopted pursuant to this bill to be a regional plan for purposes related the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- 5) Makes findings and declarations to support its purposes.

Background

Building decarbonization. According to CARB, residential and commercial buildings are responsible for roughly 25% of California's GHG emissions when accounting for fossil fuels consumed onsite, electricity demand, and leakage of refrigerants. Of that 25%, about half is attributable to fossil fuel combustion, including natural gas, with residential buildings accounting for 2.5 times more of those emissions than commercial buildings.

California's building energy efficiency standards. The California Energy Commission (CEC) adopts building energy efficiency standards that are cost effective for occupants over the 30-year lifespan of a building. The standards ensure builders use the most energy efficient technologies and construction, save energy, increase electricity supply reliability, increase indoor comfort, avoid the need to build new power plants and help preserve the environment. State law also tasks the CEC with developing and implementing a comprehensive program to achieve greater energy savings in California's existing residential and nonresidential building stock that fall significantly below the current standards in Title 24. The CEC has also adopted a Building Action Plan that sets out a ten-year roadmap to use market forces to improve California's existing residential, commercial, and public building stock into high-performing and energy-efficient buildings.

Local green building codes. Local ordinances that adopt the state building codes may include amendments that are more stringent than the state codes if the local governing body makes findings the amendments are necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions. The California Green Building Standards Code provides local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions include environmental conditions established by the city, county, or city and county, meaning local agencies can adopt more stringent green building requirements than the state codes. The CEC must approve these “reach codes” as cost effective and at least as energy efficient as state standards before they go into effect. To date, 79 cities and counties in California have adopted reach codes that exceed the statewide minimum 2022 Energy Code requirements, according to a dashboard for the California Public Utilities Commission’s Reach Code program.

Building Decarbonization Assessment. AB 3232 (Friedman, Chapter 373, Statutes of 2018) requires CEC to assess the potential for the state to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases by the state’s residential and commercial building stock by at least 40 percent below the 1990 levels by January 1, 2030. In August 2021, CEC released a “Building Decarbonization Assessment” evaluating the possibilities, costs, impacts, and barriers of reducing GHG emissions in residential and commercial buildings. It also identifies several strategies that will lead to significant emission reductions. The Building Decarbonization Assessment states that, “By 2030, fewer than 10% of residential buildings will have been built following 2019 or later Energy Codes unless measures are taken to ramp up new construction. To achieve the 40% GHG reduction in residential and commercial buildings, the state will need to accelerate the number of retrofits done each year. The state’s existing building stock has the potential to either set California on the road to decarbonization or be a roadblock to achieving climate goals.”

Climate Action Plans. Local agencies can adopt certain plans to reduce their GHG emissions and mitigate the climate impacts of their activities. One such document is a climate action plan (CAP). A CAP is a voluntary document that:

- Identifies baseline GHG emissions;
- Sets a target level of GHG emissions;
- Forecasts business-as-usual emissions without additional actions;
- Chooses strategies to reduce emissions to meet the target;
- Identifies implementation steps, including funding; and
- Provides for monitoring and tracking of emissions.

According to CARB’s 2019 Report on the State of CAPs in California (the most recent available), 181 cities and 21 counties have adopted CAPs.

Advocates for green technology wants to require cities and counties to create plans to meet their electrification needs.

Comments

- 1) *Purpose of this bill.* According to the author, “In order to meet the state’s climate goals, Californians will need over one million chargers to support the eight million electric vehicles anticipated on the road by 2030, and more to meet the state’s 2035 electric vehicle mandate. Residential and commercial buildings will also need upgrades and retrofitting and installation of electric appliances and equipment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. AB 39 requires cities and counties to create plans to meet their transportation and building electrification needs, and to ensure that electric vehicle chargers and building electrification are accessible to renters, multi-family housing residents, commercial vehicle and truck fleets, and disadvantaged communities. This bill requires consideration of and planning for on-street electric vehicle charger corridors and electrification funding strategies for disadvantaged communities.”
- 2) *If at first you don’t succeed, plan?* AB 39 requires cities and counties to plan for actions that are important for reducing GHG emissions and mitigating climate change: building decarbonization, electric vehicle infrastructure, and clean energy generation, among others. However, a wide variety of efforts and requirements at the state and local levels already address these needs, including requirements for energy efficiency measures in new construction contained in state building standards; reach codes that exceed state requirements; locally-adopted CAPs, and streamlining of permitting for EV chargers and hydrogen refueling stations, among numerous others.

AB 39 layers additional planning requirements on local governments that will take time and resources to complete. Since California has already adopted ambitious goals regarding carbon neutrality and GHG emissions, it is unclear that requiring local agencies to develop an electrification plan will substantially change how local agencies approach these goals. For example, local agencies must adopt the electrification requirements in the building code and streamline the permitting of EV chargers regardless of whether they have to adopt an electrification plan pursuant to this bill. Furthermore, the time that local agencies spend on this plan may detract from the ability of local agencies to undertake these other efforts that have more concrete outcomes. The Legislature may wish to consider whether it should focus on identifying where local electrification efforts have fallen short, such as consideration of equity in access to zero-emissions technologies, and the steps needed to put existing

GHG mitigation strategies into action rather than to add an additional, duplicative planning requirement on top of the existing system.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

SUPPORT: (Verified 9/9/25)

Building Decarbonization Coalition (co-source)
Calstart, Inc (co-source)
Advanced Energy United
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Afl-cio
Ava Community Energy Authority
CA African American Chamber of Commerce
Calasian Chamber of Commerce
California Association of Realtors
California Center for Sustainable Energy
California Electric Transportation Coalition
California Environmental Voters
California Green New Deal Coalition
California Hydrogen Coalition
California Solar & Storage Association
California State Association of Electrical Workers
California State Council of Service Employees International Union (seiu California)
City of Santa Monica
Civicwell
Cleaneearth4kids.org
Climate Center; the
Coalition of California Utility Employees
Edison International and Affiliates, Including Southern California Edison
Electric Vehicle Charging Association
Electrify America, LLC
Natural Resources Defense Council
Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility
Rewiring America
Rising Sun Center for Opportunity
San Diego Gas and Electric Company
Santa Monica Democratic Club
Sierra Club of California
Southern California Gas Company
Streets are for Everyone

The Climate Center
The Climate Reality Project, Bay Area Chapter
The Climate Reality Project, California State Coalition
The Climate Reality Project, Los Angeles Chapter
The Climate Reality Project, San Diego Chapter
The Climate Reality Project, San Fernando Valley CA Chapter
Union of Concerned Scientists
Valley Can (Clean Air Now)
Vote Solar

OPPOSITION: (Verified 9/9/25)

California Contract Cities Association
Lake Elsinore Valley Chamber of Commerce
Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce
Temecula Chamber of Commerce
Wildomar Chamber of Commerce

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 65-10, 6/3/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Arambula, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Davies, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, Lowenthal, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Hadwick, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Tangipa

NO VOTE RECORDED: Castillo, Chen, Jeff Gonzalez, Lackey

Prepared by: Anton Favorini-Csorba / L. GOV. / (916) 651-4119
9/9/25 9:36:47

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