

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 222 (Wiener) – As Amended June 15, 2026

Policy Committee:	Housing and Community Development	Vote:	10 - 0
	Local Government		8 - 0

Urgency: No State Mandated Local Program: Yes Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill establishes requirements for and places limitations on cities and counties and common interest developments (CIDs) regarding the installation of residential heat pump water heater or heat pump heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems (residential heat pump systems).

Among its major provisions, this bill:

- 1) Beginning July 1, 2027, requires a city, county, or city and county (city or county) to adopt and offer asynchronous inspections for installations of residential heat pump systems that do not require a licensed contractor and building inspector to be simultaneously present during the inspection, but allows a building inspector to schedule an additional inspection requiring the contractor to be simultaneously present, if deemed necessary by the building inspector.
- 2) Until January 1, 2028, allows a city or county to require up to one (or more, as specified) nondiscretionary permit per installation of a residential heat pump system in which the city or county administratively approves an application to install the residential heat pump system.
- 3) Limits local standards a city or county may apply, in addition to state-level requirements, on the installation of a residential heat pump system to standards (a) for installation setbacks, (b) to encourage building efficiency, (c) to mitigate adverse impacts on public health and safety, (d) to regulate noise, and (e) for payment of prevailing wages and the employment of apprentices, as specified.
- 4) Prohibits a city or county from requiring a permit or inspection for a plug-in ready window air conditioner or a window heat pump HVAC system, if certain requirements are met.
- 5) Requires, by July 1, 2028, a city or county to implement an online, automated permitting process that issues a permit in real time for the installation of a “swapout,” as defined, that does not require the installation of a new electrical panel or structural work.
- 6) Requires a city or county to make publicly available on its website a list of the local standards adopted pursuant to item 3, above, any required permitting documentation and a list of all relevant fees or fee amounts a city or county may impose on the installation of a residential heat pump system.

- 7) Requires a city or county to allow an applicant to submit a permit application electronically and submit an electronic signature on all forms, applications, and other documentation.
- 8) Prohibits a city or county from charging a permit fee for a residential heat pump system that exceeds the reasonable cost of providing the service, not to exceed \$150 for a residential heat pump water heater system or \$200 for a residential heat pump HVAC system.
- 9) Authorizes a city or county to charge a permit fee that exceeds the fee limits above if the city or county, as part of a written finding and an adopted resolution or ordinance, provides substantial evidence of the reasonable cost to issue the permit, as specified.
- 10) Exempts small cities and counties, as defined, from items 5 through 8, above.
- 11) Requires a city or county that applies to receive funding from the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission (California Energy Commission or CEC), to self-certify to the CEC its compliance with any applicable provisions of this bill.
- 12) Provides none of the above provisions applies to new residential construction.
- 13) Makes void and unenforceable any provision of the governing documents, architectural guidelines, or policies of a CID that prevents the replacement of a fuel-gas burning appliance with an electric appliance that complies with all applicable state and local building codes.
- 14) Makes void and unenforceable any covenant or restriction and any provision of a governing document of a CID that effectively prohibits or restricts the installation or use of a residential heat pump system.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Ongoing and one-time General Fund costs to impacted cities and counties are of an unknown amount, but likely significant and greater than \$150,000 statewide with respect to offering asynchronous inspections, establishing automated permitting systems, updating and maintaining website information, establishing permitting fee structures, and accepting electronic applications and signatures. Some costs associated with these activities may not be state-reimbursable because cities and counties may adjust permitting fees to cover associated administrative costs. Other costs, particularly information technology (IT), implementation, training, and maintenance costs to establish and maintain new automated structures and electronic capabilities, will be borne by the local jurisdiction and are potentially reimbursable by the state, subject to a determination by the Commission on State Mandates.

Notably, the bill exempts from the online permitting, fee limitations, and electronic application provisions a city with a population of fewer than 5,000 persons or a county with a population of fewer than 150,000 persons, including each city within that county.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

Unfortunately, the permitting process for heat pumps is deeply broken, making homeowners suffer long waits, high fees, and needless hoops

just to install a heat pump. [This bill] will create a standardized permitting process across the state that is faster, simpler, and cheaper for homeowners and contractors. Making these dual-use, zero-pollution air filtration and HVAC systems more accessible will help Californians build climate resilience and speed the recovery of communities impacted from climate disasters, such as Los Angeles. Updating the permitting process is also an essential step to help the state meet its goals of installing 6 million heat pumps by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality by 2045.

This bill is cosponsored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Building Decarbonization Coalition Action Fund, and the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) and has extensive support from clean energy interests.

- 2) **Background.** Heat pump technology offers a fossil fuel-free alternative to traditional gas water heaters and HVAC systems. Unlike gas appliances that generate heat directly, heat pump equipment uses electricity to move heat from one place to another. In 2022, Governor Newsom established a goal of installing six million heat pumps in California by 2030. As of December 2024, the state had an estimated 1.9 million heat pumps installed, according to a 2025 report by the California Heat Pump Partnership. That report noted, “at the current rate of heat pump adoption, the state is projected to reach only 4 million heat pumps by 2030.”

Residential heat pump system permitting procedures vary by jurisdiction but are generally similar to the permitting process for other types of HVAC systems or water heaters, with some local governments offering instant online permitting of certain installations. Reports by the California Heat Pump Partnership and SPUR cite permitting as one obstacle to installing residential heat pump systems, including differing approval processes, timelines, and costs for permit approval.

In recent years, the Legislature has supported electrification efforts by enacting a series of bills to ease the permitting process of solar energy systems and electric vehicle charging systems. This bill standardizes and streamlines the permitting process for residential heat pump system installations.

- 3) **Opposition.** This bill is opposed by the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties, the Rural County Representatives of California, and others who assert that affordability, not local permitting, is the barrier to electrification. They cite a California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) study that identifies emergency replacement circumstances, high upfront costs of residential heat pump systems, electrical upgrades, and installation costs as the primary barriers to consumer decisions to install these systems, not local permitting processes and fees. The opposition further asserts, if the Legislature's goal is to accelerate adoption, then instead of imposing new mandates on local governments, the Legislature should expand consumer incentives to install these systems.
- 4) **Related Legislation.** SB 282 (Wiener), of this legislative session, among other provisions, contains provisions similar to those in this bill. SB 282 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee's suspense file.