



SUPPORT ENERGY AND WATER EFFICIENCY IN LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles takes great strides to be a sustainable and resilient city. But with an ever-increasing population, constrained natural resources, and the need to take meaningful action on climate change to ensure a prosperous future, especially in the wake of the region's most severe drought in history, we must use our existing resources wisely. This includes making Los Angeles buildings as energy- and water-efficient as possible.

Recognizing this, the City of Los Angeles and the State of California have already made ambitious goals to improve energy and water efficiency in buildings. The creation and passage of a city-wide ordinance addressing energy and water efficiency in existing buildings is a crucial step to help meet our goals, and keep Los Angeles as a sustainable leader.

WHY BUILDINGS MATTER

About half of Los Angeles' electricity demand comes from just 4 percent of its buildings¹ Within buildings, about 30 percent of the energy used is wasted due to inefficiencies.² This high use and waste has a large effect on the city's health. 51 percent of Los Angeles' carbon emissions come from buildings. Buildings are also heavy water users, and saving water through improving efficiency in buildings is critical in our drought-stricken region.

Increasing energy and water efficiency in Los Angeles' large buildings will drastically reduce the city's carbon footprint, improve resiliency during drought and heat waves, and alleviate pressure on the electric grid. Further, investing in energy and water efficiency saves building owners and tenants money on their utility bills, increases the buildings' value in the real estate market, improves tenant comfort and overall productivity, generates new green jobs, and creates a more equitable Los Angeles.

EXISTING CITY- AND STATE-WIDE ENERGY AND WATER GOALS

To reap these many benefits, we must think ambitiously, something the City and State is already doing. On April 8, 2015 Mayor Garcetti unveiled the City's first ever Sustainable City pLAN³—a comprehensive strategy to improve Los Angeles' environment, economy, and social equity, with bold, yet achievable goals in each area. **The pLAN calls to reduce city-wide energy use per square foot by at least 14 percent in 2025 and 30 percent in 2035.** These goals complement LADWP's aggressive energy efficiency targets, which are expected to have the same carbon emissions impact as removing 440,000 cars from the road each year.⁴

California is in extreme drought, and Los Angeles imports 80 percent of the water it consumes from sources that are at risk of depletion. Recognizing this is not a path to a sustainable future, Mayor Garcetti signed an Executive Directive to reduce per capita potable water use by 20 percent by 2017.⁵ Further, the Sustainable City pLAN calls for a reduction in water use by at least 22.5 percent by 2025 and 25 percent by 2035.

These aggressive city-wide goals correspond with new state-level requirements. Governor Brown's April 2015 Executive Order⁶ directed the State Water Board to implement mandatory water reductions to reduce potable urban water usage by 25 percent. And Senate Bill 350, signed in September 2015, calls for a doubling of statewide energy efficiency savings by 2030.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Analysis by the California Center for Sustainable Communities at UCLA and the City Energy Project.
- 2 <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings/about-us/facts-and-stats>
- 3 <http://plan.lamayor.org/>
- 4 http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/dsullivan/los_angeles_city-owned_electri.html

STRONG SOLUTIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

To help achieve our city-wide sustainability commitments, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed a motion in December 2014,⁷ directing the Department of Building and Safety to convene a stakeholder process to develop a package of policies and programs to improve the energy and water efficiency of Los Angeles' existing buildings. That stakeholder process spanned ten meetings from January to July 2015 and encompassed hundreds of people representing a wide range of industries including building owners, property managers, real estate associations, energy efficiency professionals, utility representatives, business owners, non-profit organizations and many more. **The comprehensive feedback received from stakeholders during this process strongly favored the creation of an ordinance that would reduce energy and water consumption in existing buildings through benchmarking, transparency, audit, and retro-commissioning practices.**

HELP L.A. MOVE FORWARD

Benchmarking and transparency laws have become a common best practice among leading cities looking to reduce city-wide energy and water consumption.⁸ Additionally, energy and water audits, along with retro-commissioning, have proven to be effective tools to improve a building's performance. By adopting these innovative and practical solutions, Los Angeles would be on the right path for reaching ambitious city-wide efficiency targets, while cutting energy and water waste, boosting the local economy, reducing harmful pollution, and promoting equity across the city.

We urge you to support the creation of an existing building efficiency ordinance to help reduce energy and water consumption in buildings across Los Angeles.

For more information contact Kimi Narita, Director of Strategic Engagement for the City Energy Project at the Natural Resources Defense Council, knarita@nrdc.org, (310) 434-2317.

www.laexistingbuildings.org

- 5 http://www.lamayor.org/executive_directive_5_emergency_drought_response_creating_a_water_wise_city
- 6 http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/emergency_regulation.shtml
- 7 Council File 14-1478, available at: http://clkrep.lacity.org/online/docs/2014/14-1478_MOT_10-29-14.pdf
- 8 <http://www.imt.org/resources/detail/fact-sheet-energy-benchmarking-and-transparency-benefits>