



Community
Environmental
Council

Bold Climate Action
Acción Climática Audaz

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Top Policy Actions of 2023



Community Choice Energy

BACKGROUND

In 2021-2022, CEC brought customer awareness to the new Community Choice Energy programs that we strongly advocated for over the last decade. These programs currently provide—or will be providing—100% renewable electricity to our region 15 to 25 years ahead of California law. They also offer tens of millions of dollars annually in regional funding and programming to help residents and organizations adopt clean energy technologies like electric vehicles and heat pumps.

In 2023, CEC focused on bringing Community Choice Energy to the remaining three governments in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties that do not already have access to these programs. We also advocated for strong labor and environmental justice standards, as these agencies procure billions of dollars of electricity on behalf of our communities.

2023 PROGRESS

- On March 20, the City of Port Hueneme voted unanimously to fund a feasibility study to join the Clean Power Alliance (CPA) that would expand 100% renewable energy access to 21,712 people. CEC worked with Mayor Martinez, rallied the community, and provided public comment. Over the summer, CPA developed the feasibility study to determine the City of Port Hueneme's impact on CPA's peak load and total generational requirements. In October, CPA decided to incorporate Port Hueneme officially. On November 6, the City of Port Hueneme voted unanimously to join CPA as a member agency. Port Hueneme will select its default renewable energy choice in 2024.
- On March 21, the County of San Luis Obispo joined Central Coast Community Energy. CEC provided public comment and worked with partners to help ensure this success that expands 100% renewable energy access to 121,964 people.
- On June 7, the City of Santa Paula voted 4-1 to select a 100% renewable default, resulting in all accounts defaulting to 100% renewables. CEC worked extensively to network and make new relationships in Santa Paula, and as a result, six people made public comments, including organizations and youth.
- In the first half of 2023, CEC worked closely with key organizations and community members to encourage the City of Fillmore to join the Clean Power Alliance—a decision that would expand access to 16,667 people. On June 13, the Clean Power Alliance gave a presentation to Fillmore's City Council. CEC worked extensively to network and make new relationships in Fillmore with significant public comment; however, the Council declined to support a feasibility study and, instead, asked for a future meeting with Southern California Edison. It is unlikely that Fillmore will join the Clean Power Alliance in 2023.
- On June 21, Central Coast Community Energy passed a Project Selection Criteria that incorporates high standards for labor, environmental, and environmental justice policy. CEC worked for years with a coalition to get this passed. This is likely to be a trendsetting policy that will be adopted by other Community Choice Energy programs, expanding its influence.

Climate-Smart Agriculture

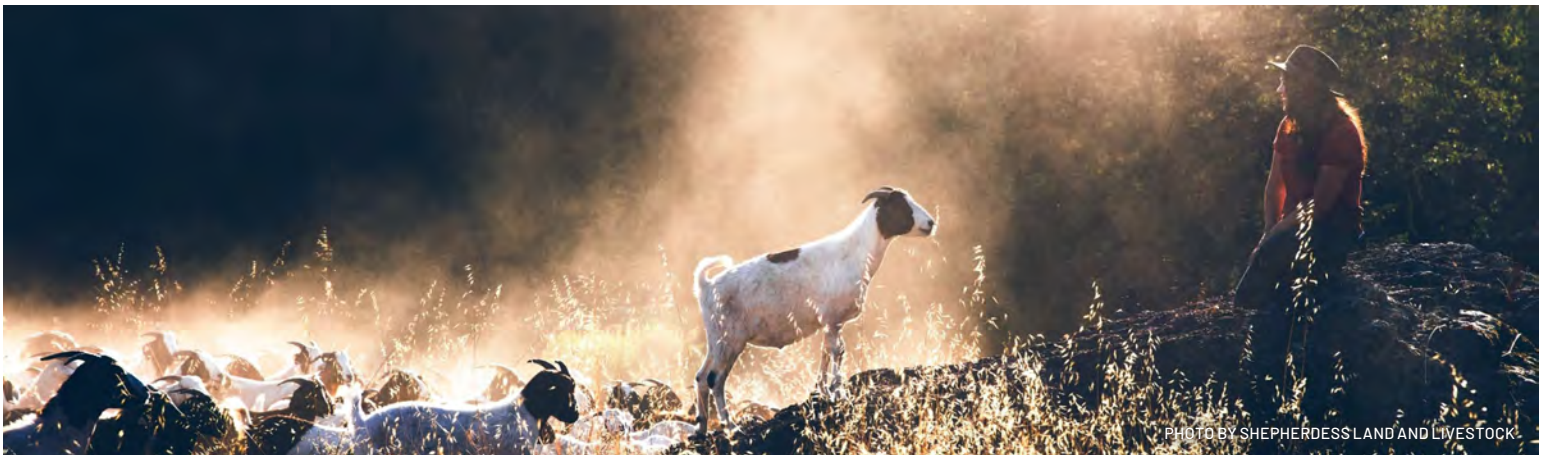
BACKGROUND

Scaling Climate-Smart Agriculture is critical to meeting our region's aggressive carbon neutrality goals. Our vast natural and working lands need to be used to sequester carbon from the air into the soil.

In 2023, CEC focused on working with local governments to develop a framework that unlocks private and public financing for natural and working land sequestration while reducing barriers to implementation. CEC has also been working with statewide partners to develop SB 675, a bill that would greatly expand prescribed grazing, an important fire mitigation and ecological resilience tool.

2023 PROGRESS

- CEC worked closely with State Senator Monique Limón and our partners at the California Climate and Agriculture Network (CalCAN, the bill's sponsor) to develop SB 675. SB 675 is critical to further integrating prescribed grazing into the state's wildfire funding programs and ensuring it is effectively used for fire mitigation and ecological resilience. The development process included legislative meetings with lobbyists to edit bill language and gain support for the bill.
- CEC provided important technical insight on grazing ecology, gaps in current policy, and on-the-ground perspectives from grazing contractors. CEC also led outreach relating to the bill, including hosting a prescribed grazing webinar on March 23 with Senator Limón, CalCAN, a contractor grazer, and a local ecologist.
- In June, the California Assembly on Natural Resources Committee unanimously voted in favor of SB 675 with bipartisan support and no registered opposition. Although the bill seemed to be moving forward, it was delayed until early 2024 due to last-minute amendment requests from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL Fire). However, SB 297 (Fong) passed with some elements of SB 675 incorporated, including defining prescribed grazing in statute, which makes it easier to reference in future bills and budgets, and making public outreach, education, and training on prescribed grazing an eligible activity in the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program.
- With partners, CEC is advocating for the County of Santa Barbara to hire a climate-smart agriculture staffer and include more natural and working lands carbon sequestration potential in the 2030 Climate Action Plan. CEC submitted a sign-on letter with 11 organizations, farmers, and ranchers asking the County of Santa Barbara to fund a position to ensure natural and working lands are fully engaged as a climate solution. In April, CEC resubmitted the letter with additional comments before the County budget hearings.



All-Electric Building and Electric Vehicle Reach Codes

BACKGROUND

All-electric building and electric vehicle (EV) reach codes for new construction are critical to ditching fossil fuels, producing healthier, more affordable, more sustainable buildings, and expanding EV charging access. In recent years, CEC has successfully campaigned to pass all-electric codes in the County of Ventura and the Cities of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ojai. In these jurisdictions, most new residential and commercial buildings (with some exceptions) are required to be constructed all-electric.

In 2023, CEC focused on supporting all-electric codes for new construction in coordination with the County of Santa Barbara and the Cities of Goleta and Carpinteria. CEC also campaigned for cities across Ventura County to develop all-electric codes and advocated for the City of Goleta to adopt an EV code.

2023 PROGRESS

- CEC collaborated with the Sierra Club, Climate First: Replacing Oil & Gas (CFROG), and a network of local organizations and communities working on all-electric codes throughout California. CEC worked with this group on strategy and turnout while attending meetings with a reach code working group, advisory committee, and subcommittee to support strong all-electric codes. CEC also used these campaigns to more systematically engage CEC-trained Climate Stewards and other climate activists throughout our region.
- The County of Santa Barbara and the Cities of Goleta and Carpinteria were set to pass all-electric codes in the second quarter of 2023, but on April 17, the City of Berkeley's all-electric ordinance was overturned by a federal appeals court. Berkeley has appealed the ruling. The ordinance is expected to be considered by a larger panel of judges and could likely be overturned, which would send it to the Supreme Court of California.





PHOTO BY MEGHAN WOODBURY

- On April 10, the City of Carpinteria passed a first reading of an all-electric code. The second reading was scheduled but was pulled after the Berkeley ruling.
- On April 17, the City of Goleta passed the first reading of an all-electric code. The second reading was scheduled but was pulled after the Berkeley ruling.
- The County of Santa Barbara tentatively scheduled a hearing and the first reading of an all-electric code in May, but it was pulled until the Berkeley case is resolved.
- While waiting for the Berkeley case to be resolved, CEC is investigating how local governments could pass all-electric new construction and enhanced EV reach codes through the California Building Code, which is a legally strong alternative to the approach that uses the Berkeley Health and Safety ordinance.
- In the second half of 2023, CEC has been actively promoting the adoption of electric reach codes in local jurisdictions in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. The Clean Power Alliance and Central Coast Community Energy have introduced technical support and financial assistance programs designed to help member agencies mitigate the costs and efforts of adopting electric reach codes.
- CEC and local advocates met with elected climate leaders from Camarillo, Moorpark, Thousand Oaks, Ventura, Santa Paula, and Oxnard to discuss the Clean Power Alliance's Reach Code Program in order to promote reach code adoption for buildings and EVs. CEC is advocating for local jurisdictions to adopt reach codes to enhance health, safety, cost savings, and climate benefits.
- On August 10, CEC and SLO Air Pollution Control District hosted a meeting about EV reach codes with Peninsula Clean Energy and six cities and counties. EV reach codes require more EV charging infrastructure at new developments, particularly for multifamily housing and workplaces.
- On September 28, the City of Goleta moved forward with an EV reach code at their Green Committee with CEC's support.

Additional Policy Actions

BACKGROUND

In 2023, CEC has scaled up environmental advocacy across city councils, boards of supervisors, and legislative bodies. CEC has met with elected officials and, so far in 2023, has taken 58 policy actions as described below.

Q1 JANUARY-MARCH

CEC took 14 policy actions, including writing six public comment letters and speaking at six city and county council meetings. CEC also took action on three state bills and had two meetings with elected officials.

State bills CEC supported include:

- SB 675 – Expands prescribed grazing
- SB 12 – Increases the California greenhouse gas emissions reduction target to 55% below the 1990 level by 2030, instead of the current reduction target of 40% below the 1990 level by 2030
- SB 529 – Expands EV access for low-income households by providing grants for carsharing at public and low-income housing developments

Local CEC policy letters and verbal comments included:

- Support for all-electric codes in the Cities of Carpinteria, Goleta, and Ojai
- Support for joining Community Choice Energy at the County of San Luis Obispo and the City of Port Hueneme
- Support for electric vehicle fleet policies at the City of Santa Barbara and the County of Santa Barbara
- Input on the County of Santa Barbara Housing Element and the City of Santa Barbara bike-share program
- Support for a climate champion city manager for the City of Ventura and limits to campaign contributions from oil companies in the County of Ventura

Q2 APRIL-JUNE

CEC took 21 policy actions, including writing three public comment letters and speaking at nine city council and county meetings. CEC also took action on 12 state bills and one federal rulemaking, and had 12 meetings with elected officials.

State bills we supported include:

- AB 841 – Industrial Heat Electrification Roadmap Bill
- ACR49 – Designates April as California Native Plant Month
- SB 435 – Documents Latinx and Indigenous health disparities
- SB 823 – Provides access to affordable EV charging
- AB 1232 – Expands resilient and higher welfare grants to support the implementation of higher standards of care and more climate-smart farming practices



- SB 233 – Requires all EVs sold in California to have bidirectional EV charging
- SB 1176 – Requires local municipalities to include electrification of transportation and buildings in their General Plans
- AB 1224 – Requires the Employment Development Department to conduct a green jobs survey
- AB 156 – Provides policy detail to the Budget Act of 2021
- AB 408 – Finances climate-resilient farms, sustainable healthy food access, and farmworker protection

Local policy letters and verbal comments included:

- Support for all-electric codes at the Cities of Carpinteria and Goleta
- Support for the City of Fillmore to join Clean Power Alliance
- Support for the City of Santa Paula to join Clean Power Alliance at the 100% renewable default option
- Opposition to ExxonMobil Plains Pipeline at the County of Santa Barbara Planning Commission
- Support for labor, environmental, and environmental justice policy at Central Coast Community Energy
- Support for the County of Santa Barbara to implement a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas target in the 2030 Climate Action Plan and hire a climate-smart agriculture position

Q3 AND Q4 JULY-NOVEMBER

CEC took 23 policy actions, including writing seven public comment letters and speaking at 12 local city and county meetings. CEC also had 27 meetings with elected officials.

Local policy letters and verbal comments include:

- Support for electrification and EV reach codes in the Cities of Ventura and Goleta
- Support for a Climate Action Resilience Plan in the City of Ventura
- Support for policies and programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the County of Ventura
- Support for dedicated bike lanes in the City of Santa Barbara
- Opposition to the oil and gas settlement agreement in the County of Ventura
- Opposition to the extension of Ormond Beach Generating Station in Oxnard
- Support for zero-emission standards for all new buildings
- Support for heat pump standards to be included in 2023 building code updates
- Support for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects in the County of Santa Barbara
- Support for Infill Land Use option in the City of Santa Maria
- Support for Strauss Wind Energy Project in the County of Santa Barbara

There are many ways to take action
Hay muchas formas de actuar

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