

As California moves aggressively to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, will the state leave behind its low-income residents? Many of these residents — 40% of the state’s population — live in multifamily housing units and apartments, where they have limited access to in-home retrofits that could save them on their energy bills and reduce overall emissions. These retrofits require upfront capital that low-income tenants may lack, as well as approval and awareness by landlords who may be unwilling or unable to support them.



To identify ways to help solve this thorny problem, UC Berkeley School of Law’s Center for Law, Energy & the Environment (CLEE) and UCLA School of Law’s Emmett Institute on Climate Change and the Environment are today releasing a new report, [Low Income, High Efficiency](#). The report offers policy solutions to increase access to energy efficiency incentives and unlock environmental, financial, and quality-of-life benefits for owners and residents alike, including:

- Creating a single, statewide “one-stop shop” efficiency program administrator to comprehensively manage incentives and offer users a single point of access.
- Expanding innovative financing mechanisms such as “pay as you save” and third-party “energy budget” arrangements that take advantage of residents’ utility bills and private capital.
- Creating a comprehensive database to help prioritize retrofit projects and support energy data benchmarking and analysis efforts.

The report also contains numerous additional solutions for policy makers to consider, as well as five case studies focusing on California low-income multifamily properties that recently undertook efficiency projects, in order to yield valuable lessons learned. The findings resulted from two stakeholder convenings with experts across state energy agencies, local governments, housing owner/developers, environmental and housing advocates, and efficiency program implementers and contractors.

California has [committed](#) to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and [doubling](#) the energy efficiency of buildings by that year, but the state will need significant improvements in the energy performance of existing buildings to achieve these goals. While the state has adopted [aggressive standards](#) for efficiency in new construction, owners and residents of existing low-income multifamily buildings face a particularly daunting set of barriers, including limited access to capital, complex financing arrangements and restrictions, and competing renovation needs. [Low Income, High](#)

[Efficiency](#) offers a suite of policy innovations and proposals to address these challenges.

To discuss the report's findings, CLEE and the Emmett Institute will host a [free webinar](#) on Thursday, June 20 (tomorrow) at 10am with an expert panel, including:

- California Energy Commissioner **Andrew McAllister**
- **Peter Armstrong** of Wakeland Housing
- **Martha Campbell** of the Rocky Mountain Institute

You can RSVP for the webinar [here](#) and [download](#) the report.