

DOCKETED

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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
Office of the Commissioners
1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512



July 16, 2015

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
California State Assembly
State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, California 94249-0063

Dear Assemblymember Rendon:

Thank you for your letter dated June 30, 2015, highlighting the challenges your constituents and others across the state are facing under California's severe drought conditions. The California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) shares your concerns.

In addition to plans for a statewide appliance rebate program for clothes washers for all Californians that will begin this summer, the Energy Commission is developing a direct install appliance and fixture program for low-income families in partnership with the Department of Community Services & Development (CSD) and the Department of Water Resources. The direct install program adds water appliances and fixtures including showerheads, kitchen and bathroom faucets, dishwashers, and clothes washers to the existing weatherization program and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) offered by CSD in single-family and multi-family households in disadvantaged communities. This program was designed to target the gap in other programs for multi-family dwellings. Our plan is for the direct install program to launch in the fall. Funding for both the appliance rebate program and the direct install program must be approved by the Legislature.

The Energy Commission specifically addresses your suggestions as follows:

- Informational and outreach material in languages other than English that represent the diversity of the state and the specific communities where the programs will be offered.

Energy Commission staff held three workshops on our drought-related programs in June and July, to ensure that the public is aware of these programs. Notices for these workshops went out in Spanish. Factsheets on our programs have been available since April in English, Spanish and Korean.¹ We plan to add Vietnamese, Chinese and Tagalog. Once the Guidelines are final, the Energy Commission will continue to work with our contractor and staff to ensure that outreach and education materials will be available in multiple languages.

- Technical and non-technical information on the best available products eligible for rebates to enable individuals to make informed buying choices.

¹ For Drought Rebate Fact Sheets: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/drought/rebate/> and for Water Energy Technology Program Fact Sheets: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/wet/>

Rebate program participating retailers and the program website will include a list of eligible appliances. Eligible models represent a range of price points to encourage all Californians to participate. Eligible appliances will be clearly marked in stores where appliances are sold. The direct install program for low-income participants will include information for participating households about the water savings appliances and fixtures, as well as general information about California's drought and other water-saving tips.

- A process for enforcing statewide product quality standards and assisting those families who receive substandard products.

Only appliances and fixtures certified to meet Department of Energy and California appliance standards are eligible for participation in both the rebate program and direct install program. Therefore, families who participate in the program will have appliances that meet energy efficient standards.

- A system for recognizing community demographics (such as the number of families, types of households) and the potential for a diversity of needs.

CalEnviroScreen 2.0 will guide the direct install program in targeting single-family and multi-family households in disadvantaged communities for participation. We want to ensure that those families that have the greatest need, are able to benefit from these programs.

- An inclusive outreach program to spread information about rebate and conservation opportunities.

Public workshops to promote outreach for these programs throughout the state began in June. The Energy Commission has conducted workshops throughout the state including, northern, southern California and the Central Valley. Further, information regarding the rebate program and eligible appliances will be made available at retailer locations, on the rebate program website, and on partner websites such as Save Our Water and California Energy Upgrade. A toll-free call center will be established to help program participants.

For the low-income direct install program, educational materials will be provided to participating households about the water appliances and fixtures, along with general information about California drought conditions and other water savings tips in English and other languages.

- Development and implementation of a "rebate means test" to ensure that the limited funds are made available to those who most need the program and other assistance, and

The Energy Commission is required to spend at least 25 percent of total program funds in disadvantaged communities identified through CalEnviroScreen 2.0. While the rebate program is available to all Californians on a first come, first served basis, a separate pot of funding (close to half of all funds) will be dedicated to the low-income direct install program that will target 100 percent of program funds to disadvantaged communities.

- A mechanism to track program use demographically and geographically.

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The installation address will be collected for those that apply to the rebate program through the online and/or mail-in process. For the direct install program, only those in disadvantaged communities will be targeted for participation and data about those households will be collected.

Thank you very much for hosting our Water Energy Technologies workshop. It was extremely well attended with over 80 participants in the room and over 60 on WebEx. We had a number of citizens from your district attend as well as local community leaders. I'd also like to send my gratitude for hosting us again for our rebate workshop tomorrow and appreciate your leadership by attending and giving opening remarks.

We appreciate your comments and welcome additional recommendations as we develop both programs. Please contact Jack Bastida at (916) 653-8906 or Jack.Bastida@energy.ca.gov if you have any questions or require additional information. I look forward to working with you to ensure the success of these important water saving programs.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Weisenmiller
Chair



J. Andrew McAllister
Commissioner