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The California Energy Commission

SB 350 Barriers Study

Legislative Background

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015 (SB 350) on October 7, 2015. The bill establishes new energy efficiency and renewable electricity targets for 2030 in order to support California's long-term climate goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. The statute also finds that there is insufficient understanding of the barriers for low-income and disadvantaged communities to access energy efficiency investments, solar photovoltaic energy generation, weatherization, other forms of renewable generation, and contracting opportunities. For this reason, SB 350 directs the Energy Commission (Commission) to conduct a study on the following topics:

- » "Barriers to and opportunities for solar photovoltaic energy generation as well as barriers to and opportunities for access to other renewable energy by low-income customers."
- » "Barriers to contracting opportunities for local small businesses in disadvantaged communities."
- » "Barriers for low-income customers to energy efficiency and weatherization investments, including those in disadvantaged communities, as well as recommendations on how to increase access to energy efficiency and weatherization investments to low-income customers."

The Commission's SB 350 Barriers Study is focused on identifying barriers, opportunities and recommendations as stated above through research, analysis, and engagement of key stakeholders and members of the public. The process for completing the study includes:

1. Literature Review

The Energy Commission has performed a literature review of over 100 available studies published by other parties (such as academia, social sector organizations) on the topic areas identified in the statute. This review highlights that the most common barriers are high up-front costs, financing, program design, ineffective information and outreach, high rental populations, and physical home attributes.

2. Gap Analysis

This second step will determine the gaps in knowledge and data. Identification of these gaps is necessary to develop detailed, actionable policy recommendations, including additional research, outreach, and analysis. The literature review, August 12 Energy Commission workshop, and community-based meetings are helping to develop, inform, and complete this gap analysis.

3. Public Engagement

Meetings Facilitated by Community-Based Organizations

Energy Commissioners and staff will participate in a series of meetings facilitated by community-based organizations. These meetings will provide an opportunity for community members to speak about their experiences with renewable energy, energy efficiency and weatherization programs, as well as roundtable discussions with representatives

of program delivery partners about barriers to and opportunities for improved delivery of such programs.

Energy Commission Workshop on Barriers

On August 12, 2016, the Energy Commission will host a workshop to gather input from state agencies, community organizations, industry, and local government. This workshop will further identify and discuss barriers to solar photovoltaic, renewable energy, and energy efficiency and identify additional opportunities and solutions.

Energy Commission Workshop on Draft Study

The Commission anticipates publishing the draft SB 350 Barriers Study in September 2016, and holding a draft workshop to solicit public input on the draft shortly thereafter.

4. Recommendations

The SB 350 Barriers Study will provide policy recommendations based on the information from the literature review, gap analysis, community-based meetings, and workshops. These preliminary recommendations will contribute to the transformative objectives of the SB 350 Barriers Study and enhance the final recommendations to address barriers for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

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Chair

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