

## DOCKETED

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# California Energy Commission Low-Income Barriers Study

Overcoming Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for Low-Income Customers

## California is Transforming Clean Energy Investments for Low-Income Customers and Local Small Businesses in Disadvantaged Communities.

To meet climate change goals, clean air standards, and energy security goals, California is transforming the way its energy is produced and used. As we make this transition, the state must ensure all Californians, including those in the most vulnerable communities, realize the resulting benefits. The Legislature, through Senate Bill 350 (SB 350, de León, Statutes of 2015), directed the California Energy Commission to conduct a study on the following:

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

## The Energy Commission offers five principal recommendations for promoting low-income and disadvantaged community access to energy programs and the benefits they enable.

### Principal Recommendations:

1. The state should establish a task force to facilitate coordination of all state agencies administering energy, water, resilience, housing, and low-emission transportation infrastructure programs for low-income customers and disadvantaged communities.

2. The state should act to enable the economic advantages of community solar to be readily accessible to low-income and disadvantaged populations across California.
3. The Energy Commission, California Public Utilities Commission, and California Department of Community Services and Development should partner with the California Labor and Workforce Agency, the Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, and other agencies, as well as consult with employers, the UC Berkeley Labor Center and the relevant trade unions and community-based organizations, to strategize and track progress toward achieving workforce, community, and clean energy goals.
4. The state should continue developing a series of energy upgrade financing pilot programs to evaluate a variety of models to improve access and participation of low-income customers, including those in disadvantaged communities.
5. The Legislature should require collaboration among all program delivery agencies to establish common metrics and collect and use data systematically across programs to increase the performance of these programs in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

There are seven additional recommendations, which can be found in the executive summary of the barriers study ([http://energy.ca.gov/sb350/barriers\\_report/index.html](http://energy.ca.gov/sb350/barriers_report/index.html)).

The Energy Commission developed the barriers study by conducting a thorough literature review, meeting with low income communities across the state, and hosting a series of technical workshops.

The study finds that barriers for low-income and disadvantaged community access to renewables and energy efficiency generally can be categorized as either structural or policy/program-related.

# SB 350 BARRIERS STUDY



UKIAH •  
OAKLAND •

• TRUCKEE

• FRESNO

LOS ANGELES •  
RIVERSIDE •

• 2 Workshops

**100+** Studies reviewed to understand barriers facing low-income communities.

**7** The number of community meetings held with 3 different languages spoken.

**7** The number of languages into which key documents have been, or will be translated.

**12** Recommendations made in study.

**1** Barriers study.

Structural barriers, which are often inherent to the conditions of poverty such as large rental markets resulting in split incentives and structural or design issues often associated with older homes. These types of barriers may be mitigated but are often difficult to eradicate. Policy and program barriers include: market delivery in which programs may disproportionately exclude low-income customers, a need for better coordination across programs, and a need for better use of information to improve program designs. These barriers could be addressed through changes in program design or legislation.

**Now that the initial barriers study is complete, the Energy Commission will work with other state agencies, community groups, interested stakeholders, and the Legislature to accelerate access to clean energy investment in low-income communities.**

As next steps, the Energy Commission plans to:

- Hold implementation workshops in early 2017.
- Consider the specific implementation details of the recommendations.
- Develop timelines for carrying out identified solutions.
- Identify potential funding sources.
- Review and incorporate, as appropriate, new information from ongoing low-income clean energy efforts.

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