

**DOCKETED**

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## **2021\_05\_26\_\_\_\_21-IEPR-06 May 25th Session 2 Meeting Schedule for IEPR Commissioner Workshop on Building Decarbonization**

This same comment is attached in a pdf:

Wednesday, May 26th, 2021

California Energy Commission and Other Stakeholders:

Thank you for holding another public event regarding current efforts on Building Decarbonization.

Though I actively participated in ZOOM's Question and Answer fields as a public participant, I felt it best to follow-up more formally in this docket.

I want to express a formal thanks to the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and other stakeholders for suggesting decarbonization strategies to assist low-income customers with heat pump, heat pump hot water heater and induction cooking retrofits.

I am low income. I worked at SMUD, 2005-2015. After I quit to work on physical health issues, I earn less than \$16K annually if I did not access funds (401 and 457 retirement funds which were rolled over into an IRA after leaving) put aside while I was employed. Since 2015, I depleted much IRA funds and been advised to restrict myself heavily from accessing much more. I paid out of pocket to improve to attic insulation and ducting a few years ago and waited on replacing a 2005 installed heat pump.

One issue shared in the past, living full-time at my townhouse community street-front location, is abundant white noise. I live across the street from a 69 and 12 kV distribution station. My front door is near a 2-lane street, an intersection maybe a mile from a freeway overpass and thoroughfares such as Folsom Boulevard and Bradshaw Roads. Leaf blowers and nearby construction noise has been prominent. Our townhouse properties are small. The HVAC units are close to not only an owner's bedroom but the neighbor next door. I hoped to find a heat pump which would have lower decibels and abide by Sacramento County's noise ordinance - which is 55 decibels 1 foot from the fence on the neighbor's side according to a letter sent. I had thought it was 65 db, but found this letter indicating this low 55 db value. This was nearly impossible to work on. Quiet residential heat pump machines seemed to hardly exist. Quiet high efficiency heat pump machines seemed less recommended and/or cost more. I was offered a deal by one contractor which was not easily matched or reconsidered a year later. Though Sac. County is said not to inspect for meeting the noise ordinance, I wanted to reduce noise pollution. The noise issue frustrates.

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When COVID restrictions happened, noise decreased here, though remains prominent. Opening the windows at night when the substation is operating heavily, one often easily hears loud low-level substation air conditioning features. There has seemed less traffic, which makes less noise. More neighbors seem to be turning off their HVAC units at night. This can be difficult in extremely hot or cold weather. With less cycling due to higher efficiency, townhouse indoor air can become stuffy. I believe I learned at a UC Davis Energy Bite seminar a couple weeks ago, that residential heat pumps, unlike commercial heat pumps, do not bring in outside air either. So, despite allergies, smog and smoke sensitivities, some residential units with more efficient

heat pumps might chose to either turn on their heat pump fan or open doors and windows more. I am experimenting with both and have symptoms to deal with – inconsistent facial swelling often, which could be attributed to other parameters but is often diagnosed as an allergen response.

Through SMUD's low-income program, which I use to contribute to as an employee, a new heat pump, air exchanger and thermostat was installed for free. Though I had no choices in what was installed, I was not expecting this to be free. I hope I was not specially chosen as a past employee. I also lately seem often stereotyped as an over-privileged white person, which might imply favoritism. I am grateful for this new heat pump, and usually love research. Yet, I tire of being used deeply for research and do not need people to become mad at this kind situation. The installation technicians were excellent. SMUD's staff on this installation has been easy. The new heat pump, air exchanger and thermostat has not yet been formally inspected - to my knowledge. I will also need to replace my gas water heater which was installed by contractors who did not fulfill the paid for permit. Please let me know what I can do if the situation needs any remedies.

I was encouraged to interact with Rachel Huang and Owen Howlett, both of SMUD, yesterday. I was encouraged to hear Rachel speak well on presenting low-income customers with packages for heat pump, heat pump hot water heater and induction cooking installations as a measure to decarbonize fuel in SMUD's region, though will wonder how stakeholders plan to address stranded gas assets including gas lines and meters. I was encouraged to read that SMUD is able to negotiate lower price installations. It was especially useful that SMUD dealt directly with the contractors. The contracting system, like other systems, seems to make difficulties for certain persons. I mentioned that perhaps Match Funding could be employed in SMUD's Decarbonization efforts as well, similarly to how the CEC assists with grant funding.

Thanks again to everyone who organized, managed, spoke, presented, discussed and especially for those who endured without regret the public questions and answers yesterday. I know that extra time and consideration can be extra difficult and take painful - please forgive this inappropriate word use - extraordinary time. Thanks for keeping time issues under civil and reasonable control.

Sincerely,

Claire Warshaw