

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	22-DECARB-03
Project Title:	Equitable Building Decarbonization Program
TN #:	252313
Document Title:	Senator Anna Caballero Comments - Direct Install Program Guidelines
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Senator Anna Caballero
Submitter Role:	Public Agency
Submission Date:	9/19/2023 4:41:57 PM
Docketed Date:	9/19/2023

*Comment Received From: Senator Anna Caballero
Submitted On: 9/19/2023
Docket Number: 22-DECARB-03*

Direct Install Program Guidelines

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

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California State Senate

SENATOR
ANNA M. CABALLERO
FOURTEENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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FAIRS ALLOCATION AND
CLASSIFICATION

September 19th, 2023

Andrew McAllister, Commissioner
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Equitable Building Decarbonization Direct Install Program: Draft Guidelines

Dear Commissioner McAllister,


I write to express my support and appreciation for your leadership in developing the parameters that will guide the implementation of the Equitable Building Decarbonization Direct Install Program, appropriated by Assembly Bill 209 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 251, Statutes of 2022). The Direct Install Program has the potential to transform entire communities that struggle with rising temperatures, high energy bills, and little opportunity to make household energy efficiency upgrades. While the state of California has set ambitious emission reduction goals across several sectors, it is vital that economic support be made available to vulnerable communities most impacted by climate change, and I applaud the strategy of the Direct Install Program that encompasses this approach.

I represent Senate District 14, comprised of Fresno, Madera and Merced counties- areas of the state that have experienced some of the highest temperatures and longest duration of extreme temperatures. In 2021, for example, Fresno County experienced 69 days of temperatures exceeding 100 degrees, an all-time high and almost double the historical frequency, according to researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Without proper mitigation, exposure to extreme heat can cause existing health problems to become worse, including respiratory and heart conditions, and in extreme cases, heat stroke and death. In fact, extreme heat causes more deaths per year than any other weather event, including hurricanes and flooding. While the heat in itself is a severe problem, residents of my district also struggle with rising energy costs, and outdated appliances that do not properly combat extreme heat, such as swamp coolers. I have advocated for legislative advances to combat climate concerns, and vehemently supported budget allocations to support vulnerable populations, such as AB 209 of 2022, which appropriated the historical \$1.1 billion to establish the Equitable Building Decarbonization Program at the California Energy Commission.

I have also had the opportunity to meet with you and your team, and work closely this year to urge particular aspects of the Direct Install Program's development. Namely, the prioritization of grant funding distribution for low to moderate income residents who reside in communities disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme heat and rising temperatures. I was wholeheartedly appreciative to see this prioritization in the Draft Guidelines submitted in May of this year, and it is my hope that this provision be adopted into final regulations for the program. These underserved communities experience the worst impacts from rising temperatures, and for funding to be dedicated to these communities first would create significant relief to those most affected. While emission reductions and energy equity are substantial and worthwhile goals, it is imperative that program administrators also take into consideration how funds will enhance the health, safety, and comfort of residents relative to the program grant distribution process.

Thank you for the staunch dedication you have shown throughout the development of the Direct Install Program guidelines, and for its focus on communities, such as those in the Central Valley, that are in need of timely resources and assistance. I hope for your continued support in this matter. Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach me at my Capitol Office, 916-651-4014.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna M. Caballero". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

ANNA M. CABALLERO
Senator, 14th District