

10th Annual Statewide Energy Efficiency Forum

State Leaders Opening Plenary

Salon A/B
Level: All

Wednesday, June 26, 2019
1– 2:30 PM

Notes prepared by Jeffrey L. Rabin, Urban Planning and Environmental Consultant and Former Los Angeles Times reporter

Speakers/Panel:

Leif Christiansen, Energy Efficiency Coordinator

Edie Chang, Deputy Executive Officer, California Air Resources Board

Pete Skala, California Public Utilities Commission

Lara Ettenson, Natural Resources Defense Council

Plenary Summary:

The good news: California met the 2020 goal to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels, four years early.

The tough road ahead: To slash GHG emissions 40% by 2030 will require bold action to:

- Double the energy efficiency of buildings;
- Decarbonize the power grid by accelerating the move to renewable energy sources;
- Rapidly move California's fossil-fueled transportation system toward electric, plug-in hybrid, and fuel cell vehicles.

An extraordinary level of collaboration and innovation will be necessary to achieve California's energy goals. During the discussion, it became clear that state agencies need to provide more technical assistance to help smaller local governments, particularly in disadvantaged communities and rural areas, compete for California Climate Investment funds. California's cap-and-trade system is generating billion of dollars to reduce GHG emissions and address the impacts of climate change. But the lack of a uniform application for grants administered by 20 state agencies compounds the problems faced by local governments and community-based organizations.

Panel members identified other barriers to meeting the state's GHG reduction goals, including:

- The current method of calculating the cost-effectiveness of energy efficiency measures does not take into account co-benefits for communities;
- New ways must be found to maximize energy efficiency programs while minimizing the cost paid through utility bills.
- Extensive and expensive retrofits of buildings will be necessary to switch space and water heating from natural gas to electricity.

What are some words, phrases, or ideas that capture what practitioners need in order to successfully meet California's energy and climate goals?

Edie Chang, Deputy Director of the California Air Resources Board, told attendees that local governments touch every single thing from energy efficiency to land use planning to handling your waste. "I would encourage you to innovate."

What was inspirational or hopeful about this plenary?

More than half of \$3.4 billion in revenues from California's Cap-and-Trade program have been invested in projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, according to an analysis by the California Air Resources Board.



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Standout quotes:

“California has been able to show the country and the world that reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are possible while you continue to grow the economy.” – Edie Chang, CARB

“The goal of doubling energy efficiency by 2030 will require cost-effective actions to shift energy use to low-carbon electricity.”
– Pete Skala, CPUC

“Efficiency continues to be the cornerstone of getting to our energy goals.”
– Lara Ettenson, NRDC

