

County of Ventura
Resource Management Agency
Building and Safety Division



Ruben Barrera, PE, CBO
County Building Official
July 23, 2024

Current provisions of the Ventura County Building Code (VCBC) for all-electric buildings

- All-electric appliances and equipment were required for new buildings constructed under the 2022 VCBC
- This became effective for building permit applications submitted on or after January 2023
- The VCBC provisions were intended to reduce production of greenhouse gases by eliminating most natural gas appliances
- Over 40 City and County jurisdictions in California adopted similar provisions



Benefits

HEALTH



Electric appliances improve indoor air quality.

RESILIENCY



Electric appliances provide greater resiliency when paired with solar and battery storage.

Benefits

SAFETY



All-electric buildings reduce the risk of gas leaks, fires, and explosions from gas infrastructure.

COST



All-electric buildings cost less to build, and modern electric appliances are more energy efficient.

CRA vs City of Berkley Decision

- Some jurisdictions with all-electric requirements included an exemption for restaurants into their ordinances
- In 2023, the California Restaurants Association (CRA) sued the City of Berkley
- The CRA prevailed in the State Appellate Court, which essentially banned the prohibition of natural gas appliances
- In March 2024, Ventura County Building and Safety ended the enforcement of the VCBC all-electric provisions



Other Local Approaches and Forthcoming Guidance From State (for 2025 Update)

- A handful of cities have adopted amendments to the State Energy Conservation Code to achieve carbon neutrality
- The State Energy Commission may update its Code in 2025 to achieve higher levels of energy savings
- The Building Standards Commission may update the 2025 Green Building Code to reduce carbon footprint
- The County currently enforces the State's Energy Code and the Green Building Code during the Building Permit process

Recommendation: Voluntary Compliance (and Incentive)

- Direct staff to create a temporary incentive program, through the end of 2025, to reduce the County's Expedited Review Fee by 50% to encourage builders to voluntarily use all-electric appliances and equipment.
- Direct staff to prepare modified code language in the existing VCBC ordinance and bring it to your Board for consideration in September 2024. These modifications would remove the prohibition of natural gas appliances, but allow for the incentivized voluntary use of all-electric appliances

Questions?