



County of Yolo

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ELECTRIFICATION RETROFIT REBATE OUTREACH PROGRAM

Proposed Early Action to Implement Resolution No. 20-114 Related to the Climate Crisis

PROPOSED ACTION

This proposed action will create a two-year, comprehensive outreach program in partnership with Valley Clean Energy to encourage low-income households in the unincorporated area to access \$1 billion for electrification rebates in the 2022-2023 state budget, as well as other related electrification retrofit rebates for existing residential homes. This is specifically an outreach and technical assistance program and does not include the distribution of energy efficiency rebates. Yolo County would focus primarily on helping low-income households access electrification rebates, as well as training and educating contractors about opportunities to help customers access these rebates. Valley Clean Energy currently possesses confidential data on low-income households in the unincorporated area that encountered difficulty paying their bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Valley Clean Energy can work with Yolo County to reach out to these households and/or landlords of multi-family dwellings to connect them with information about electrification rebates, help fill out applications, and help manage retrofits if needed. Helping these households reduce ongoing costs by targeting them directly would have long-term economic and environmental benefits. The County could also partner with nonprofit organizations to develop and implement the project. This project also includes the development of a system for tracking households which secure electrification rebates by working with the state and other rebate agencies to provide data related to successful rebate applications in the unincorporated area.

BACKGROUND

Electrification retrofits lower energy bills, create local jobs, and improve indoor air quality and health-related issues by eliminating natural gas combustion in homes. Homes and buildings where Californians live and work have been one of the largest sources of climate pollution, accounting for over a quarter of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Yet retrofits are often time-consuming and expensive to implement; the 2011 Climate Action Plan estimates the cost at an average of \$100,000/home. Roughly two-thirds of the greenhouse gas emissions from California's buildings come from gas combustion appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, and stoves. About 90 percent of furnaces and hot water heaters in the state are fueled by gas or propane, and many older homes are built without ductwork for central heating, instead relying on through-the-wall furnaces that burn gas or propane. These old furnaces emit a great deal of carbon dioxide and particulate matter.

The 2021 Yolo County Sustainability Plan includes a strategy to electrify existing homes and new residential development (BU-2) by providing incentive programs to encourage electrification of existing homes (BU-2.1). The suggested tracking metric for Action BU-2.1 is the number of existing

homes converted to all electric, as well as associated greenhouse gas reduction quantification. Providing education and outreach to low-income County residents regarding existing rebate programs would facilitate implementation of Action BU-2.1.

CONSISTENCY WITH EXISTING POLICIES

This proposal supports Measure E-2: Reduce Energy Consumption in Existing Residential and Non-Residential Buildings of the *Yolo County Climate Action Plan* (2011). Building electrification also supports strategies outlined in *Yolo County Sustainability Plan*. Specifically, the February 2021 *Yolo County Sustainability Plan* includes the following relevant strategy:

- Strategy BU-2: Electrify Existing Homes and New Residential Development
 - Action BU-2.1: Provide incentive programs to encourage electrification of existing homes

BENEFITS TO DISADVANTAGED/VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Yolo County will work to focus the Electrification Retrofit Rebate Outreach Program on low-income households and disadvantaged communities in particular by working with Valley Clean Energy to reach out to households that encountered difficulty paying their bills during the pandemic.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION

The amount of greenhouse gas emission reduction resulting from this proposal is unknown, although it is likely small because only approximately 20,000 people live in the unincorporated area of Yolo County and not all households will undertake electrification retrofits because of this program. The California Air Resources Board estimates residential and commercial buildings are responsible for 25% of greenhouse gas emissions in California, however, so the program may still result in important emissions reduction. Based on the California Air Resources Board's 2019 Greenhouse Gas Inventory, building electrification in California would result in an average annual savings of approximately 50 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO_{2e}) through 2045, so this program will ensure Yolo County is doing its share to achieve this goal. Yolo County will develop a system for measuring greenhouse gas emission reduction from this program, including working with state agencies to validate which households or property owners secured rebates and implemented electrification retrofits.

CO-BENEFITS

- Improved air quality and health by reducing hazardous pollutants
- Greater economic equity and opportunity
- Lower energy and water bills over time
- Job creation
- Improved safety and decreased risk of gas leaks, fires, and explosions
- Improved climate resiliency, particularly by providing efficient cooling during heat waves

TRANSFORMATIVE/REPLICABLE ELEMENTS

This project would create replicable models for electrification retrofit rebate programs throughout the County, region, and state. The outreach program would provide template outreach materials which other jurisdictions could use to implement similar programs.

DEGREE OF READINESS

Yolo County must identify partners and funding and develop a program design before implementation of this project can occur.

COSTS

The total cost of this action is \$350,000 to \$450,000 for a two-year outreach campaign. The estimated cost to develop an outreach strategy is \$50,000 and the estimated cost to implement the strategy is \$150,000 to \$200,000/year, including social media, earned media, videos, web site, sponsorships, paid advertisements, and assistance with applications. Therefore, Yolo County anticipates implementation costs close to \$250,000 in the first year.

FUNDING

Yolo County staff recommends allocating \$100,000 of American Rescue Plan funds in beginning stages of this effort and will pursue additional funding strategies for this project that could include ARP funding, grants, or a combination of both.

CONCERNS

Electrification retrofits may be too expensive for some residents, even with the rebates. The County may need to consider providing additional funds to encourage low-income residents on fixed incomes to implement the retrofits.

PARTNERS

- Valley Clean Energy
- Pacific Gas & Electric (“PG&E”)
- Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (“YSAQMD”)

PERSONNEL

In the chart below, please list names, role, and contact information for all project leader(s) and project partners.

Name	Role (Lead or Partner)	Email	Phone
Kristen Wraithwall	Lead	kristen.wraithwall@yolocounty.org	530-666-8047
Mitch Sears	Co-Lead, Valley Clean Energy	mitch.sears@valleycleanenergy.org	530-446-2750

Rebecca Boyles	Co-Lead, Valley Clean Energy	rebecca.boyles@valleycleanenergy.org	530-446-2753
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