



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PALOMA AGUIRRE
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: February 11, 2026, and March 4, 2026

07

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

National building codes were developed in response to natural disasters, such as fires and earthquakes. Advancements in building sciences and construction engineering have allowed codes to evolve beyond simply reducing risks. Today's codes establish minimum standards to ensure homes and buildings are designed and constructed to protect public health, safety, community welfare, and built to be more sustainable. Planning & Development Services (PDS) helps establish, use, and enforce up-to-date building codes through the review of proposed plans, issuance of building permits, and onsite construction inspections. These ongoing efforts, including regular code updates, enhance building resiliency and welfare, and maintain a culture of preparedness.

The California Building Standards Code (State Model Code) aims to ensure public health, safety, and general welfare through provisions that address structural strength and stability, emergency egress, fire prevention, electrical hazards, sanitation, air and water quality, energy efficiency, accessibility, and the sustainability of buildings and structures. Structures designed and built to these standards are more likely to maintain their structural integrity in the event of a disaster. This provides building occupants with sufficient time to escape, ensures the safety of emergency responders, and protects their lives.

Every three years, the State of California (State) updates the State Model Code. The 2025 edition of the State Model Code was published on July 1, 2025, and is available for adoption as of January 1, 2026. State law allows local governments to make more restrictive additions, modifications, and deletions through local amendments to the State Model Code when the changes are reasonably necessary due to local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions. To ensure statewide public health and safety, the State Model Code prohibits local modifications from being less restrictive than the baseline requirements contained in the codes. With each new edition of the State Model Code, State law also allows local jurisdictions to readopt any existing local

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

amendments to be carried into the triennial code update. Once adopted, the collection of State Model Codes and local amendments is collectively known as the County Building Code.

The 2025 State Model Code update makes significant advancements in energy efficiency and building sustainability, aligning with the County’s Regional Decarbonization Framework and the 2024 Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP directs the County to expand access to programs and services that will increase energy efficiency, energy resiliency, and electrification in the unincorporated area. To implement the CAP, today’s request includes updates to the existing voluntary Green Building Incentive Program (GBIP) to provide streamlined plan checks and permitting discounts for projects that voluntarily exceed the State Model Code requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy and water use in buildings.

Separately, construction and the placement of structures in areas of special flood hazard in the unincorporated county are governed by the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (FDPO). This ordinance implements the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CRS) by regulating development in floodways and floodplains to protect lives and property against flood risk. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) manages the NFIP and CRS programs and conducts periodic reviews of communities implementing ordinances like the FDPO. Today’s action also includes the introduction and adoption, by ordinance, of minor edits to the County’s FDPO to implement FEMA CRS recommendations related to engineering review and freeboard requirements. This administrative change codifies existing best practices implemented by review staff, with no new impact on designers, builders, or owners. It is important to implement FEMA recommendations to ensure unincorporated communities can continue to purchase flood insurance through the NFIP as well as receive discounts on flood insurance premiums through the CRS program.

Today’s request is the first reading to consider the adoption of the proposed ordinances, which contain local amendments to the State Model Code, and amendments to the FDPO recommended by FEMA. This request includes the readoption of prior local amendments, such as fire hardening, energy efficiency, flood prevention, and emergency housing amendments, that were previously Board directed and remain applicable. Additionally, today’s request includes updates to the GBIP to provide permitting incentives for projects that volunteer to go beyond State code requirements to support implementation of the 2024 CAP. If the Board takes the action recommended today, then on March 4, 2026, the Board can consider and adopt the proposed ordinances.

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
On February 11, 2026:**

1. In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), find that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment for the reasons stated in the Notice of Exemption (on file with the Clerk of the Board).
2. Approve the express findings demonstrating the County of San Diego amendments to the California Building Standards Code (State Model Code) are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 17958.7 (Attachment A).
3. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading), and waive further reading of the following ordinance (Attachment B):

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND GREEN BUILDING CODES (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE)

4. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading), and waive further reading of the following ordinance to amend the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, County Code section 811.101 et seq. (FDPO) (Attachment D), titled:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COUNTY FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE TO REFLECT COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

5. Waive Board Policy B-29: Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, for fees relating to plan review and permit fees for the Green Building Incentive Program in Planning & Development Services.
6. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading), and waive further reading of the following ordinance (Attachment F):

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SCHEDULE F OF SECTION 362.1 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO REDUCE FEES FOR BUILDINGS USING SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PRACTICES

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

If, on February 11, 2026, the Board takes action as recommended, then on March 4, 2026:

1. Submit the ordinance for further Board consideration and adoption (second reading).

AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND GREEN BUILDING CODES (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE)

2. Upon adoption of the Triennial County Building Code Update, direct the Clerk of the Board to provide a certified copy of the adopted Ordinance repealing and reenacting the County Building, Residential, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy Efficiency, and Green Building Codes (Triennial County Building Code) together with the associated findings (Attachments A-C) to the California Building Standards Commission at 2525 Natomas Park Drive, Suite 130, Sacramento, CA 95833 pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 17958.7.

3. Submit the ordinance for further Board consideration and adoption (second reading).

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COUNTY FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE TO REFLECT COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

4. Submit the ordinance for further Board consideration and adoption (second reading).

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SCHEDULE F OF SECTION 362.1 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE TO REDUCE FEES FOR BUILDINGS USING SUSTAINABLE BUILDING PRACTICES

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Regular updates to the County Building Code help increase transparency and create uniform standards applied equally across all unincorporated communities. Local amendments to the State Model Code create customized changes to address the public health and safety needs of our local community. Local Amendments expand beyond statewide transparency and accountability efforts through local stakeholder engagement, including direct feedback from vulnerable communities and those closely connected to the communities they serve. According to the California Energy Commission, extensive community input, including from underserved communities and those directly impacted by changes (homeowners and homebuilders), shaped the development of the State Model Code. The State Model Code helps reduce disproportionate equity impacts faced by vulnerable communities. Updates to the Energy Code, included in the 2025 State Model Code, help address some of the disproportionate effects of climate change. They introduce new standards to reduce air pollution and improve indoor air quality, thereby enhancing public health.

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed actions advance the County Sustainability Goal 3: Transition to a green, carbon free economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support green job creation and workforce development, and prepare for impacts of a changing climate by supporting energy efficiency and encouraging building and vehicle electrification. The proposed updates to County building standards and Green Building Incentive Program reduce energy consumption, reduce indoor water consumption, preserve natural resources, and protect indoor air quality. In addition, proposed wildfire and flood resiliency standards safeguard public health and well-being while reducing demand on first responders during natural disasters resulting from climate change. Increasing energy efficiency and electrification of existing buildings is one of the most impactful actions within the County’s Climate Action Plan and will result in significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions and support the County’s efforts to mitigate climate change.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with today’s action. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years. A waiver of Board Policy B-29: Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Departmental Responsibility for Cost Recovery (Board Policy B-29) is requested because the proposed waiver of fees for the Green Building Incentive Program (GBIP) will not recover full operating costs for services provided. There are already funds included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Planning for Planning & Development Services (PDS) for waivers related to plan review and building fees for the Green Building Incentive Program.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

While there is an increased upfront cost to develop certain new residential construction (heat pump technology, electric ready wiring for future electric appliances, and larger solar and storage capacity) and certain new commercial construction (increased mandatory solar and energy storage) as a result of a new requirement established by the State, the California Energy Commission (CEC) identified long-term savings for building occupants resulting from increased energy efficiency estimated to provide over \$4.8 billion statewide for the 2025 code package. These additional long-term utility energy savings would outweigh the increased upfront construction costs when measured over the useful life of the home or business (measured over 30 years). Increased construction costs are recovered through reduced utility costs over time, resulting in net cost neutrality. In addition, the 2025 code package encourages voluntary all-electric construction, resulting in estimated construction cost savings of \$2,000 to \$3,000 per unit (from removing gas appliances and gas infrastructure).

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

BACKGROUND

Every three years, the State of California (State) updates the California Code of Regulations, Title 24, also referred to as the California Building Standards Code (State Model Code). The regulatory framework for this triennial building code adoption is defined through State laws and a combination of various published model codes available for adoption. The 2025 State Model Code also includes updates to the California Residential Code (CRC), marking the last State-initiated updates until the 2031 triennial code update due to a six-year residential code development moratorium (AB-306 signed into law under AB-130 trailer bill).

The primary intent of early building codes was to reduce disaster risks. Over time, building sciences and construction engineering standards have broadened this scope to address health, safety, and the general welfare of the community. Today's State and County building codes are a robust set of minimum standards that address a variety of construction disciplines, including structural integrity, fire resistance, exiting, lighting, sanitation and ventilation, accessibility, sustainability, and construction materials. Planning & Development Services (PDS) helps unincorporated county residents navigate the building permitting and construction inspection process to meet these complex codes.

PDS staff review plans for privately initiated land development projects to ensure the plans meet the standards outlined in the State and County building codes. Staff also conduct milestone inspections during the construction of buildings and other projects. It is common for staff to identify deficiencies in both proposed plans and construction that require corrections to ensure future buildings are designed and built as safe, healthy, and sustainable structures for our communities. During fiscal year (FY) 24-25, PDS staff issued over 12,000 building permits and conducted more than 36,000 construction inspections to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of building occupants.

State Law

California Health and Safety Code Sections 17958, 17958.5, and 17958.7 provide that the County may adopt local amendments to the State Model Code determined to be reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions. The State Model Code shall apply to the County and be effective 180 days after publication by the State. If the County adopts changes or modifications, they shall become effective upon the operative date of the ordinance, and their filing with the California Building Standards Commission. The 2025 edition of the State Model Code was published on July 1, 2025, and is available for adoption as of January 1, 2026.

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

State Model Codes

The 2025 edition of the State Model Code is based on model codes published by the International Code Council (ICC), International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Combinations of these model codes are in use or adopted by all 50 states and several U.S. territories. California adopts and amends these model codes to address specific State conditions and implements standards authorized by the State legislature. Most of the State building standards in the 2025 edition of the State Model Code are identical to or are minor clarifications of the previous version, with no substantive changes. The following are some noteworthy changes in the Energy and Green Building Code sections of the 2025 State Model Code.

State Energy Code Updates

The 2025 Energy Code update encourages the use of all-electric appliances (through newer heat pump technologies), while still allowing both electric- and gas-fueled appliances. The code changes also include improved energy efficiency, increased renewable energy, energy storage, and improved indoor air quality. While the new State requirements allow for both electric- and gas-fueled appliance options, new home builders could elect to implement full electrification, resulting in estimated savings of \$2,000 to \$3,000 per unit (from removing gas appliances and gas infrastructure). A more detailed list of changes is included in Attachment H.

Green Building Code (CalGreen) Updates

The 2025 State Model Code also includes updates to the California Green Building Code (also known as “CalGreen.” CalGreen mandatory requirements encourage the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) through mandatory EV Ready (panel capacity, raceway, and branch circuit for future EV charging), EV capable (EV Ready plus conduit, wiring, and junction box for future EV charging), and EV Supply Equipment (EVSE) requirements (fully installed equipment for EV charging). The 2025 edition of CalGreen expands beyond the residential EV Ready requirements first introduced in 2019 and expanded in 2022. It includes expanded EV charging requirements for nonresidential construction (est. in 2022), with provisions for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles applicable to grocery, retail, and warehouse building types. In addition, newly constructed multi-family dwellings, hotels, and motels have expanded requirements for EV-capable, EV-ready, and EVSE-installed spaces (est. in 2022) based on the total number of parking spaces proposed for the project.

Adoption of Local Administrative Provisions

Chapter 1, Division II, of the California Building Code, while not part of the California Building Standards Code (State Model Code), includes additional administrative provisions available for adoption by local jurisdictions. The proposed ordinance adopts portions of these provisions and modifies, adds, and deletes sections as necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of the County Building Code. The proposed ordinance also preserves prior local amendments and Board direction that still extend beyond the State and are applicable to the 2025 State Model Code.

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Summary of Prior County Amendments to State Model Code

Most of the County's local amendments to State building standards in the proposed ordinance are identical to, or minor clarifications of, local amendments in past ordinances previously approved by the Board. Prior County local amendments include enhanced child-drowning measures for swimming pools, safer means of egress to structures, future support for solar and electric vehicle infrastructure, water conservation, flood prevention, and emergency housing appendices (see Attachment H for full details).

Beyond minor grammatical and formatting revisions, new local amendments in the proposed ordinance are limited to:

- Updates to the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (FDPO) (Attachments D-E) requested by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to ensure that unincorporated communities maintain current discounts on flood insurance premiums (Attachment H).
- Updates to the County Building Codes project exemption list to align with the State Model Code and expand eligibility for those qualifying projects.
- Adoption of the 2025 State Model Code Appendices for patio covers, grading, tiny homes, strawbale construction, and emergency housing. Code Appendices provide additional clarity through dedicated guidance documents, uniform instructions, and clearly defined code requirements to applicants. The adoption of these selected provisions provides code transparency, allowing project designers, County plan check, and inspection staff to review code requirements under consolidated sections designed to streamline the overall permit and inspection processes.

California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUIC)

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), over 80% of the unincorporated communities within our jurisdiction are considered High or Very High Fire severity zones. In response to past wildfires and advances in fire science-based codes, the 2025 State Model Code includes some restructuring and reorganization to introduce a new California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUIC). Portions of the previous building code (Chapter 7A) and fire code (Chapter 49) relating to building construction standards and defensible space requirements for structures located in the State-mapped Wildland Urban Interface areas have been merged into this new CWUIC. This helps protect future housing in the unincorporated jurisdiction. Today's requested action to adopt the updated County Building Code includes the removal of duplicate fire-related code sections to accommodate the adoption of the new CWUIC under the new County Consolidated Wildland Urban Interface Code (CCWUIC), presented as a separate Board item for consideration by the County Fire.

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Green Building Incentive Program (GBIP)

The 2025 State Model Code update makes significant advancements in energy efficiency and building sustainability, aligning with the County’s Regional Decarbonization Framework and the 2024 Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP directs the County to expand access to programs and services that will increase energy efficiency, energy resiliency, and electrification in the unincorporated area. Staff worked with stakeholders, identified best practices, and evaluated the changes in the State code update to identify additional opportunities to incentivize projects to voluntarily increase the use of recycled content, emerging green technologies, or water or energy conservation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy and water use in buildings.

In addition to the State-mandated triannual Building Code Updates, today's request includes updates to the existing voluntary Green Building Incentive Program (GBIP) to provide streamlined plan checks and permitting discounts for projects that voluntarily exceed the State Model Code requirements to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from energy and water use in buildings. GBIP is a voluntary incentive-based program for both residential and commercial projects, first established in 2003, for projects exceeding the State Model Code (recycled content, water, and energy conservation). Applicants can still design projects that use recycled content and water conservation measures to qualify for the GBIP. However, due to State Model Code advances, the existing GBIP energy benchmark targets of 15% for residential and 25% for non-residential, beyond the State code, are no longer feasible.

If directed, GBIP updates will expand energy eligibility criteria to create an incentive-based policy approach to implement the 2024 Climate Action Plan. This update would expand energy benchmark targets to include the following program eligibility (increased discount for higher energy benchmarks):

- CalGreen Tier 1 (or equal) for a 7.5% discount and permit streamlining.
- CalGreen Tier 2 (or equal) for a 15% discount and permitting streamlining (currently available for nonresidential, high-rise multifamily, and hotel/motel occupancies).
- Third-party green building credentials equal to CalGreen Tier 1 or 2 (ex, LEED).
- New emerging technologies and advances in green building science (equal to CalGreen Tier 1 or 2 at the discretion of the Building Official).

Note: Program eligibility would automatically sunset if any GBIP voluntary eligibility criteria are made into a mandatory requirement either through future code updates (ex, State Model Code or County Building Code updates) or otherwise required as a part of a necessary project mitigation strategy measure (ex, CAP CEQA Streamline Checklist).

The existing GBIP eligibility criteria for recycled content and water conservation would still apply:

- Recycled Content Material Conservation (7.5% discount and permit streamlining)
- Water Conservation (7.5% discount and permit streamlining)

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

Stakeholder Outreach

The stakeholder outreach and engagement strategy included workshops, presentations, and direct engagement with community members, Community Planning and Sponsor Groups, and stakeholder working groups (e.g., Farm Bureau, Land Development Technical Working Group, Building Technical Advisory Group, Building Industry Association, Labor Unions, and Environmental Coalition).

Staff held two virtual public workshops on July 22, 2025 and October 28, 2025. These workshops were advertised on public-facing websites and social media and invitations were extended to all PDS and County Fire stakeholders and interested parties. A diverse range of workshop attendees included the general public, representatives from other cities and counties, students from various academic institutions, and other interested stakeholders from the groups as mentioned earlier. During this outreach, staff discussed prior local amendments, proposed local amendments, and state-mandatory changes contained in the 2025 State Model Codes. In this outreach, County PDS and Fire staff shared draft ordinance language. They also discussed how the County Building Code, County Consolidated Fire Code, and CWUIC would be used as a transparency tool and how they could best serve their respective groups.

The environmental stakeholder groups, including the San Diego Building Electrification Coalition, expressed interest in advancing energy conservation (beyond the State's energy efficiency standards), incentivizing electrification (beyond the State's electric-ready standards), and encouraging the adoption of new and emerging technologies (including heat pump technologies). These groups are aware of the County's ongoing efforts under the Regional Decarbonization Framework and the 2024 CAP, which includes energy conservation and electrification code options that extend beyond State standards and will be brought forward to the Board for consideration at a future date. Today's requested actions make progress on building energy efficiency and electrification, including the State's prescriptive requirements for increased energy efficiency, encouraging the use of heat pump technologies, and mandatory electric-ready standards and the County's proposed updates to the GBIP based on the stakeholder feedback collected. The County will continue to highlight the benefits of electrification and the savings associated with transitioning away from fossil fuel appliances as part of CAP implementation.

Construction and building stakeholders expressed concerns that the 2025 State Model Code and additional local requirements could add time and cost to projects. State and local energy efficiency amendments must be cost-effective, ensuring that any initial incremental costs are recouped over time. Today's requested actions adopt the State Model Code, which analyzed costs and benefits, finding that incremental upfront costs associated with the new State requirements resulted in net utility savings, higher energy efficiency, and overall societal benefits. Under the new State requirements, new construction projects could elect to use the electric-ready State mandates to transition to all electrical appliances, with reported potential net savings per unit. The 2025 State Model Code allows for applicants to meet energy efficiency through mixed-fuel options (including

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

gas). Included in today’s actions is the option to expand eligibility to the existing GBIP, which would streamline permitting time and reduce permitting costs for projects and incentives to build and design higher energy efficiency and electrification.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this project may have a significant effect on the environment because the proposed adoption and amendments do not result in any physical changes to the environment as indicated in the Notice of Exemption (on file with the Clerk of the Board). Staff has reviewed the changes and finds no risk of environmental impact. Therefore, the project is exempt from CEQA.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The County’s Strategic Initiative of Sustainability, included in the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan, seeks to unify the County’s efforts in environmental preservation, quality of life, economic development, education, and recreation. The action requested today will support the County’s goals of maintaining high standards for quality of life by maintaining building and fire safety in the unincorporated area and will assist economic development by facilitating consistent enforcement and interpretation of the County Building, Residential, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy Efficiency, and Green Building Codes (County Building Code).

Respectfully submitted,



DAHVIA LYNCH

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Note: Due to the size of the attachments, the documents are available online through the Clerk of the Board’s website at www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/cob/bosa.html.

- Attachment A – California Health and Safety Code Section 17958 Express Findings
- Attachment B – An Ordinance Repealing and Reenacting the County Building, Residential, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy Efficiency, and Green Building Codes (Triennial County Building Code Update) (Clean Copy)
- Attachment C – An Ordinance Repealing and Reenacting the County Building, Residential, Electrical, Plumbing, Mechanical, Energy Efficiency, and Green Building Codes (Triennial County Building Code Update) (Strikeout Information Copy)
- Attachment D – An Ordinance Amending the County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to Reflect Community Rating System Requirements (Clean Copy)

SUBJECT: ADOPT AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, GREEN BUILDING CODES, AND AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE, AND RELATED CEQA EXEMPTION (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE) (2/11/2026 – FIRST READING; 3/4/2026 – SECOND READING) (DISTRICTS: ALL)

- Attachment E – An Ordinance Amending the County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to Reflect Community Rating System Requirements (Strikeout Information Copy)
- Attachment F – An Ordinance Amending Schedule F of Section 362.1 of the San Diego County Administrative Code to Reduce Fees for Buildings Using Sustainable Building Practices (Clean Copy)
- Attachment G – An Ordinance Amending Schedule F of Section 362.1 of the San Diego County Administrative Code to Reduce Fees for Buildings Using Sustainable Building Practices (Strikeout Information Copy)
- Attachment H – Triennial County Building Code Update (Supplement and Resources)
- Attachment I – Action Sheet