

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 04, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 1

**SUBJECT: SECOND CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE:
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

On February 11, 2026 (07), the Board of Supervisors took action to further consider and adopt the Ordinances on March 4, 2026.

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 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.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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.

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).

ACTION:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent, and adopted the following:

1. Ordinance No. 10982 (N.S), entitled: AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING THE COUNTY BUILDING, RESIDENTIAL, ELECTRICAL, PLUMBING, MECHANICAL, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND GREEN BUILDING CODES (TRIENNIAL COUNTY BUILDING CODE UPDATE);
2. Ordinance No. 10983 (N.S), entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE COUNTY FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE TO REFLECT COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS; and,
3. Ordinance No. 10984 (N.S), entitled: 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.

AYES: Aguirre, Anderson, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

State of California)
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter