

# **The California Energy Commission and Its Programs**

## **A Public Information Guide**



**Prepared by the Public Adviser's Office  
of the California Energy Commission**

# Background

The California Energy Commission (formally called the Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission) was established in 1974 to address the multiple energy challenges facing the state at that time. While the state's energy challenges may vary over time, the primary mission of the Energy Commission has remained essentially the same since its inception. That mission is to assess, advocate and improve energy systems that promote a strong economy and a healthy environment.

With a population of more than 37 million (as of September 2005), California is the world's fifth largest consumer of energy and ranks second globally, behind the United States as a whole, in gasoline consumption. We have a large, diversified economy that needs a steady supply of competitively priced energy. The state is a world leader in energy research and development, as well as in generating electricity from renewable energy resources. It has developed an industry based on these resources which currently employs over 30,000 residents and generates over \$2 billion in state tax revenues. California is also a leader in energy conservation and efficiency. Since 1977, the state's energy efficiency and conservation programs have saved California consumers of electricity and natural gas over \$20 billion. More recently, these programs helped the state to get through electricity shortage periods during 2000-2002.

## Who We Are and What We Do

The **California Energy Commission** is the state's primary energy policy-development and facility-licensing and monitoring agency. It has the following major responsibilities:

- Forecasting future energy supply/demand and keeping historical energy data.
- Licensing and monitoring the construction, operation and closure of thermal power plants 50 megawatts or larger.
- Promoting energy efficiency through appliance and building standards.
- Developing energy technologies and supporting renewable energy.
- Planning for and directing state response to energy emergencies.
- Providing information on transportation energy, natural gas and alternatives to conventional fuels, as well as global climate change and energy technology export opportunities.

Since the Electric Industry Deregulation Law went into effect in 1998, the Energy Commission's role also includes overseeing programs that (1) support public interest energy research; (2) advance energy science and technology through research, development and demonstration; and (3) provide market support to existing, new and emerging renewable technologies.

With energy challenges facing the state, the Energy Commission and its dedicated staff (consisting of scientists, engineers, lawyers, economists, analysts, project managers and various

administrators and support employees) work hard to turn challenges into opportunities and help Californians continue to have adequate energy choices that are affordable, reliable, diverse, safe and environmentally acceptable.

The Energy Commission and its staff are headquartered in Sacramento, the location for the majority of its activities. However, the Energy Commission also holds hearings and workshops for power plant siting and other programs outside of Sacramento to provide direct and ongoing public access to its programs and activities.

## **Guiding Principles of the Energy Commission**

The Energy Commission's work is guided by the following principles, as specified in its Strategic Plan:

- **Mission**

It is the California Energy Commission's mission to assess, advocate and act through public/private partnerships to improve energy systems that promote a strong economy and a healthy environment.

- **Vision**

It is the vision of the California Energy Commission to have energy choices for Californians that are affordable, reliable, diverse, safe and environmentally acceptable.

- **Values**

The California Energy Commission's highest responsibility is to the people of California. We strive to provide maximum public benefit, while ensuring fiscal integrity and accountability for the expenditure of public funds.

- **Products and Services**

We are committed to providing quality products and services that are timely, accurate, reliable and useful. We work to continuously improve technologies, the content and usefulness of our programs and the delivery of our products and services.

## **The Commissioners**

The Governor appoints the five members of the Energy Commission to staggered five-year terms and selects the chairperson and the vice chairperson from among them.

By law, one member must be selected from the public at large. The remaining commissioners represent, respectively, the fields of engineering/physical sciences, economics, environment and law. The appointments require Senate approval.

## **The Public Adviser**

The Governor also appoints—upon nomination by the Energy Commission—a Public Adviser for a term of three years. This appointment does not require Senate approval.

The Public Adviser is an attorney licensed to practice law in California who serves as adviser to the public and to the Energy Commission to ensure full and meaningful public participation in the Commission’s policy and regulatory decision-making processes.

## **Funding of the Energy Commission**

The administrative budget of the California Energy Commission is funded primarily from a surcharge on electricity consumption in California. In addition, specified amounts from revenues generated by a “public goods” surcharge (collected by the investor-owned utilities) are allocated each year to finance grant/loan programs for renewable energy and specified energy research/development activities. Moreover, federal and other state funds support designated energy programs administered by the Energy Commission.

Most of the Energy Commission’s annual budget is “passed through” with grants and loans for various energy efficiency, research, development, demonstration and renewable energy projects. These grants and loans are available, through competitive public solicitation processes administered by the Energy Commission, to local governments, schools, hospitals, scientists, universities and consumers.

To show how these “pass-through” funds dominate the Energy Commission’s budget: in the 2005-06 Fiscal Year, \$256.5 million (or about 79 percent of the \$324 million total budget of the Energy Commission) is budgeted to “pass through” for the various grants and loans programs. Only \$67.5 million (or about 21 percent of the entire budget) is allocated for administrative support of the Energy Commission and its staff of approximately 480 employees.

## **How to Contact the Energy Commission**

1. **Internet access:** the Energy Commission’s website provides a wide range of information about the Commission, its programs, events, publications and links to other, related websites. Currently, there are four sites:

- Main website: [www.energy.ca.gov](http://www.energy.ca.gov)
- Consumer's Energy Center: [www.consumerenergycenter.org/](http://www.consumerenergycenter.org/)
- Student, Teacher and Parent website: [www.energyquest.ca.gov/](http://www.energyquest.ca.gov/)
- Energy technology export website: [www.globalenergyconnection.ca.gov/](http://www.globalenergyconnection.ca.gov/)

## 2. Telephone access:

- General information phone number: (916) 654-4287
- Toll-free phone number (in California) : (800) 555-7794
- Contracts Office (916) 654-4392
- Media and Communication Office numbers (for all media contacts):
  - Phone: (916) 654-4989
  - FAX: (916) 653-5590

## 3. Energy Commission mailing address:

California Energy Commission  
 1516 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
 Sacramento, California 95814

## 4. Public Adviser's Office:

- Phone: (916) 654-4489
- Toll-free phone (in California): (800) 822-6228
- FAX number: (916) 654-4493
- E-mail: [PAO@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:PAO@energy.state.ca.us)

# Contact Information for Key Programs

## 1. Energy Efficiency Programs

- **Title 24 Building Efficiency Standards Program**
  - Toll-free phone (in California): (800) 772-3300
  - Toll phone number (outside California): (916) 654-5106
  - FAX Number (in or outside California): (916) 654-4304
  - E-mail: [title24@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:title24@energy.state.ca.us)
- **Appliance Efficiency Program**
  - Phone: (916) 654-4091 or (916) 654-4080
  - FAX: (916) 654-4304
  - E-mail: [appliances@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:appliances@energy.state.ca.us)

- **Public Programs (efficiency services and loan programs for public schools and other local public entities, as well as for certain industrial sectors)**

- Phone: (916) 654-4147
- FAX: (916) 654-4304
- E-mail: [publicprog@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:publicprog@energy.state.ca.us)

## **2. Renewable Energy Programs**

- Toll-free phone (in California): (800) 555-7794
- Toll-phone (outside California): (916) 654-4058
- FAX: (916) 653-2543; or (916) 653-8251
- E-mail: [renewable@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:renewable@energy.state.ca.us)

## **3. Research and Development Programs**

- Phone: (916) 654-4878
- FAX: (916) 654-4872
- E-mail: [rortiz@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:rortiz@energy.state.ca.us)

## **4. Energy Facilities Siting and Compliance Program**

- Siting:
  - Phone: (916) 654-4082
  - FAX: (916) 654-3882
  - E-mail: [eallen@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:eallen@energy.state.ca.us)
- Dockets
  - Phone: (916) 654-5076
  - FAX: (916) 654-4365
  - E-mail: [DOCKETS@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:DOCKETS@energy.state.ca.us)
- Compliance:
  - Phone: (916) 654-5100
  - FAX: (916) 654-3882
  - E-mail: [rjohnson@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:rjohnson@energy.state.ca.us)

## **5. Transportation Energy Programs**

- Phone: (916) 654-4628
- FAX: (916) 654-4676
- E-mail: [djones@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:djones@energy.state.ca.us)

## Stay Informed and Participate in the Process

You can stay informed about the Energy Commission's programs and activities from our website or by contacting us using the information provided in this booklet. You may monitor and participate in the Energy Commission's public proceedings as follows:

- **Signup on "List Server":** Interested persons can be assured notification of upcoming Energy Commission public sessions on a case or topic of interest by requesting that their names be added to the appropriate "list server." Persons may make this request at any of the public sessions they attend, sign up on the Energy Commission's website, or contact the Public Adviser (at 916-654-4489, toll-free in California at 800-822-6228, or e-mail at [PAO@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:PAO@energy.state.ca.us))
- **Public Comment/Testimony:** In addition to signing up on a particular "list server," interested individuals or groups are also encouraged to attend public meetings, hearings or workshops of the Energy Commission or its sub-units on a case or topic of interest. These events always provide an opportunity for public comment. Some events may also include the opportunity to testify. These instances of public participation may be entered into the public record of the particular proceeding and be considered by the Energy Commission in its decision-making process.
- **Intervenor Status:** Intervention is used primarily in power plant licensing cases. To intervene formally in a particular case, individuals must petition the Energy Commission's siting committee for "intervenor status." Intervenors are a full party to the proceedings with the same rights and obligations as the other parties, such as the project applicant and the Energy Commission staff. You do not have to be an attorney to intervene. The Public Adviser's Office staff will assist anyone who wants to intervene in an Energy Commission proceeding. They can provide you with information, forms and help with the administrative process, but cannot intervene for you or represent you in a proceeding.

California Energy Commission  
Public Adviser's Office

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