



Dear Partners:

Thank you for expressing interest in the [Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative](#), ACEEE's ongoing effort to scale utilities' energy efficiency programs and focus them on meeting the climate challenge. We are writing today with news updates and relevant resources from leaders taking action in this community.

Best,

The ACEEE Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative Team

Climate-Forward Efficiency Symposium

More than 100 participants joined ACEEE for a Climate-Forward Efficiency workshop on March 24. Following opening remarks from ACEEE's Edward Yim, breakout sessions focused on topics related to building electrification, measuring greenhouse gas reductions, and facilitating legislative and regulatory change. Here are selected takeaways from the discussion:

- While developing new products can be beneficial, training engineers and integrating various kinds of technology are more important for advancing building electrification.
- Jurisdictions that want to phase out natural gas need to plan carefully so that they do not burden customers who cannot yet afford electrified technologies.
- Lifting fuel-switching moratoria will be necessary for more widespread building electrification.
- There is a need for greater standardization of climate-forward efficiency issues, including definitions and methodologies for measuring greenhouse gas reductions.
- Illinois's Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and Minnesota's Energy Conservation and Optimization Act are successful policy models for workforce training and stakeholder engagement.

To learn more, check out the full [summary notes](#) from the symposium. Resources from a related webinar held on February 24 are available [here](#).

News Spotlight

Maryland recently passed two pieces of legislation that exemplify principles of climate-forward efficiency:

- The [Climate Solutions Now Act](#) establishes a statewide goal of net-zero emissions by 2045. Equity is a key focus of legislation, which includes clear definitions of "overburdened" and "underserved" communities. In addition, the new law makes Maryland the first state to dedicate public dollars to a green bank.
- [House Bill 108](#) pledges Maryland to achieve 1% annual incremental gross energy savings for low-income households by 2026. By braiding together funding from multiple sources, including the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust Fund and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development will support weatherization, health and safety upgrades, and other energy efficiency improvements for low-income housing.

New Mexico recently passed the [Community Energy Efficiency Development Block Grant Act](#) to reduce energy burdens for low-income customers, specifically those who are most impacted by climate change. The law established a fund to provide block grants for energy efficiency projects

in affordable housing. Application criteria for proposed projects include reduction of energy burdens, protection of public health, and contributions to economic recovery. Due to the prevalence of high energy burdens in rural areas, the application criteria also prioritize geographic diversity of selected projects. By accounting for multiple benefits of energy efficiency, this new program can deliver greater savings compared to traditional efficiency activity.

Pennsylvania recently joined the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#) (RGGI), a cap-and-trade emissions program that involves eleven other states. Pennsylvania must now achieve annual emissions reduction by directly reducing emissions or purchasing allowances from other states. Pennsylvania plans to direct earnings from carbon allowance auctions toward the Clean Air Fund, which focuses on advancing energy efficiency and reducing air pollution in an equitable manner. As the largest generator of electricity among the RGGI states, Pennsylvania's participation will help the state decarbonize the electricity sector while improving energy efficiency and public health.

Resource Spotlight

- [A recent ACEEE report](#) outlines the potential of energy efficiency as a service (EEaaS) for saving energy and helping governments and utilities meet their decarbonization targets. EEaaS involves a long-term contract between an EEaaS vendor and customer in which the vendor provides the capital required for the upfront costs of energy efficiency upgrades. In exchange, the customer pays the service provider regularly for realized energy savings. Although utility involvement is still mostly in the pilot phase, utilities can play an important role in scaling EEaaS and achieving deep energy savings through partnering with existing providers or administering their own programs.
- Richard Cowart (Regulatory Assistance Project) and Chris Neme (Energy Futures Group) created [a presentation](#) on Vermont's Clean Energy Standard, which requires suppliers of fossil fuel heating to gradually deliver higher shares of low-emission fuel sources to customers. The increasing share of low-emission fuels directly corresponds to emission reduction goals, which will be significant for reducing Vermont's overall emissions. To achieve emission reductions, the Clean Energy Standard creates a credit exchange system in which utilities can earn credits by selling biofuels, weatherizing homes, installing heat pumps, and other actions.
- While traditional energy efficiency has focused on partially reducing energy intensity and emissions, climate-forward efficiency calls for utilities to achieve net-zero emissions in response to the climate crisis. [The role of energy efficiency](#) in a net-zero energy system

is the subject of [a new report](#) by Jan Rosenow (Regulatory Assistance Project) and Nick Eyre (Oxford University Centre for the Environment). The authors argue that a net-zero-emission energy system requires full replacement of fossil fuels; it is not enough to switch to more-efficient fossil fuel products. They also note the importance of promoting and maintaining energy efficiency benefits (e.g., lower household bills, energy security, better health and comfort) even in an all-renewable energy system.

Opportunities to Engage

If you would like to share feedback on the Climate-Forward Efficiency Initiative or offer relevant knowledge or services, please reach out to Edward Yim at eyim@aceee.org.

[Smart Energy. Clean Planet. Better Lives.](#)

[Support ACEEE today with a tax-deductible contribution!](#)

Share/forward this email:     

*The **American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy** (ACEEE), a nonprofit research organization, develops policies to reduce energy waste and combat climate change. Its independent analysis advances investments, programs, and behaviors that use energy more effectively and help build an equitable clean energy future.*

Connect with us on social media:



ACEEE, 529 14th Street., N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20045

Sent by aceeenews@aceee.org