



## February Newsletter

Kate,

The aftermath of the recent winter storm across much of the lower 48 should put fire in the belly of all of us working to build a better energy future. [Hundreds of thousands](#) of homes in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Louisiana were without power for most of a week in extreme cold following the storm.

For people in poorly insulated and leaky houses, these conditions were hazardous. Many were stuck at home in life-threatening indoor temperatures. One [Nashville renter](#) told the Associated Press, “I saw my breath in the house,” after just one night without power. Multiple counties have reported indoor deaths tied to [hypothermia](#), [carbon monoxide poisoning](#), and [fires](#) associated with improvised heating.

Efficiency improves resilience. [Research](#) shows that homes built or renovated to modern energy codes can maintain safe temperatures during a prolonged power outage for several days longer than those that aren’t. And among homes that don’t lose power, well-insulated and air-sealed homes see smaller increases in their utility bills. In an era when one in four households are behind on bills, efficiency matters even more.

As I [explored last week](#), policymakers have a clear role in helping prepare our homes for futures storms. Ensuring that brand-new homes have adequate insulation should be a no-brainer, and they should scale up programs that help households pay for upgrades in existing homes. Our communities’ safety depends on it.

Best,

Jennifer Layke  
Executive Director



## Efficiency Update

- **Manufactured housing:** The U.S. House recently passed, in a [263-147](#) vote, [a bill](#) to revoke the Department of Energy's 2022 efficiency standards for manufactured homes and eliminate the department's authority to set them again. For families in new double-wide manufactured homes, the bill would raise annual energy costs by \$475 compared with the standards, according to Department of Energy figures. ACEEE is working to prevent any such measure from passing in the Senate.
- **Restrictions on funding for affordable rental housing:** The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued [revised requirements](#) for the Green and Resilient Retrofit Program, a \$1 billion Inflation Reduction Act program aimed at energy and sustainability improvements in affordable rental housing. Among other changes, the new guidance shifts all pending grants to be loans, removes greenhouse gas emissions requirements, no longer includes solar panels and electric vehicle chargers as eligible measures for some awards, and shifts some responsibilities from HUD to grantees. HUD is subject to a court order to continue the program, which it had mostly paused in early 2025.
- **Proposed efficiency cap in Rhode Island:** Governor Dan McKee recently [proposed](#) capping ratepayer funding of energy efficiency programs at \$75 million a year. Rhode Island Energy's current \$95 million efficiency budget is already 18% lower than in 2025.

## Our Latest Research



### [\*\*Appliance Efficiency Standards Have Saved Households \\$6,000 on Bills Over the Last Decade\*\*](#)

This study by the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, housed at ACEEE, presents new figures—for each state—on how much the standards have lowered bills and reduced electricity demand, pollution, and water waste.



### **Utility Programs Are Key to Unlocking Building Performance Standard Savings**

This paper examines the range of utility programs that can support jurisdictions in adopting building performance standards and ensuring that under-resourced buildings can comply.



### **Housing Developer Insights on the Impacts of Transportation Policies**

We interviewed housing developers to understand how transportation policies and investments influence what gets built.

See all our recent [blog posts](#) and [press releases](#).

## **ACEEE in Action**



*(clockwise from top left) Jennifer Layke, Jasmine Mah, Tim Dallmann, and Charlie McCrudden discussed how countries are leveraging efficiency gains in a recent [briefing](#).*

## ACEEE in the News

A few of our favorite media highlights from the past month:

- [Grist](#) quoted local policy manager Stefen Samarripas on local government efforts to improve energy efficiency in rental housing.
- [Canary Media](#) quoted senior policy director Mark Kresowik on the U.S. House's vote to roll back efficiency standards for manufactured homes.
- The [Washington Post](#) quoted the Appliance Standards Awareness Project on a congressional bill on showerhead standards.

## Opportunities

- The Urban Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are calling for proposals for the [Local Data for Equitable Communities grant program](#), due March 3. The program will fund up to 30 nonprofits to use data to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions that help residents live their healthiest lives. It seeks proposals to improve housing, transportation, community safety, climate, and the built environment.

## Staff Update

**Vanessa Normil** joins ACEEE as accounting associate. Vanessa holds a bachelor's degree in management finance from the University of Massachusetts Boston.



## Upcoming Events



March 24–26, 2026  
Phoenix, AZ

*Register by February 20 to save*

[Learn more](#)



August 2–7, 2026  
Pacific Grove, CA

*Save the date*

[Learn more](#)

## Community News

- Register now to join [Accelerating the Transition](#) in San Francisco, April 18–20. The conference focuses on how cities, states, counties, utilities, and public agencies can speed the clean energy transition. You'll meet clean energy leaders in areas including power generation and transmission, storage, transportation, industry, buildings, and natural climate solutions. ACEEE is a proud participating organization in the event, which kicks off SF Climate Week.

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

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