Energy Projects at a Glance

RECENTLY COMPLETED

Southern California Regional Energy Needs Assessment
Funder: Los Angeles Cleantech Incubator

This project analyzed geographic differences in per capita electricity consumption, clean energy, greenhouse gas emissions intensity, and energy program adoption (e.g., solar and electric vehicles) for Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Orange Counties, with a focus on assessing energy needs in disadvantaged communities.

Keeping the Lights and Heat On: COVID-19 Utility Debt in Communities
Funder: Chan-Zuckerberg Foundation

In collaboration with the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, researchers analyzed household utility debt. They found that about 6% of the Northern and Central California households served by PG&E are facing financial difficulties paying their bills, and that utility debt burden is highest among Black, Latino, and economically vulnerable neighborhoods.

The Role of Community Choice Aggregators in Advancing Clean Energy
Funder: Rockefeller Brothers Fund

At the local level, community choice aggregators (CCAs) — which offer communities public control over their electricity purchasing decisions — are accelerating the transition to carbon-free energy. The report found that CCAs purchased twice as much renewable energy as required by the state from 2011 to 2019. As other states look to use CCAs to advance environmental goals, we examined California as a case study by exploring the customer features, design, and policy attributes that have enabled this success.

Identifying Effective Residential Demand Response Program Designs
Funder: California Energy Commission

With a grant of more than $2 million, we tested how to best implement demand response programs so households can reduce their energy use and costs during peak times, such as heat waves. The study found that supporting the adoption of automation devices like smart thermostats, offering financial incentives, and emphasizing economic benefits of participation led to larger energy use reductions.

Grassroots Outreach to Connect Low-income Households with Energy Programs
Funder: Liberty Hill Foundation

We assessed the process and outcomes of emPOWER, a project connecting low-income households with energy efficiency, solar energy, electric transportation, and financial assistance programs through local community-based organizations. Our evaluation found that this effort has been successful in reaching areas of L.A. County impacted by poverty and pollution, and offers potential as a replicable model.

State and City Progress Toward 100% Clean Energy in the U.S.
Funder: Southern California Edison and the Luskin Center for Innovation's Foundation

In 2019, we hosted a landmark summit that brought together 300 national, state, and local leaders to share lessons learned about the renewable energy transition. At this event, we released the first ever national progress report on 100% clean energy policies. Findings include that one in three Americans lives in a city or state that has committed to, or already achieved, 100% clean electricity.

CURRENTLY ACTIVE

LA100 Equity Strategies: Energy Affordability and Policy Solutions Analysis
Funder: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

How can Los Angeles ensure an equitable transition to 100% clean energy? Achieving the LA100 goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035 is necessary but expected to increase electricity rates for ratepayers in Los Angeles. A concerted effort must be undertaken to improve affordability for vulnerable households. We are assessing energy affordability, identifying affordability metrics, and analyzing policy options, as part of a larger equity strategies analysis in collaboration with LADWP, NREL, researchers across UCLA, and other partners.

Identifying Tribal Needs in Climate Adaptation and Resilience
Funder: California Energy Commission

The California Tribal Gap Analysis will identify tribal communities' priorities, needs, and barriers in the areas of clean energy, transportation, and climate change adaptation. We are supporting the project with research design and analysis, as part of a team led by Prosper Sustainability.

Analyzing Enrollment in an Energy Program Pilot for Low-Income Residents
Funder: Valley Clean Air Now

Since 2019, the emPOWER campaign supported by Valley Clean Air Now has aimed to reduce barriers associated with low-income and disadvantaged community household enrollment in clean transportation, environmental incentive, and other Southern California Edison programs that enhance affordability. This report analyzes an adaptation of the original emPOWER approach to support SCE-served households in Kings and Tulare counties.

The Transition to a Clean Grid in Los Angeles: Employment Impacts
Funder: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)

In collaboration with the LADWP, we are quantifying the workforce impacts of retiring once through cooling (OTC) practices at LADWP's coastal power facilities, as well as associated investments to modernizing the utility's electrical grid and the city's transition to 60% renewable energy by 2030. The study compares different scenarios achieving these goals, ranging in their aggressiveness towards decarbonization by 2030.

Enabling Local Support for the Transition to 100% Carbon-Free Electricity Across the United States: A Community Choice Energy Policy Brief
Funder: Rockefeller Brothers Fund

At the federal level, discussions about creating a national clean energy standard are taking place. Evidence from California has shown that enabling grassroots demand for clean energy can help to accelerate the achievement of such clean energy goals. A recent LCI report found that community choice aggregators (CCAs), a type of local, public electricity provider, are an effective tool to enable this grassroots energy demand. This policy brief will describe existing and proposed CCA legislation in order to provide a useful summary of where and how local support for supporting the clean energy transition is currently enabled.

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