

Clean Energy Choice Program



How does the Clean Energy Choice Program affect SLO residents?

The Clean Energy Choice Program only applies to new buildings.

- The Clean Energy Choice Program does not apply to existing buildings, additions, or alterations.
- Any existing building with natural gas appliances will not be affected, even if that building is sold, renovated, or changes use.
- For people who would like to transition to clean electricity in their home or business, the City will develop a program in 2020 to support voluntary rooftop solar and appliance retrofit projects.

Do all new buildings need to comply with the Clean Energy Choice program?

The City adopted a measured and phased approach to encourage all-electric new buildings.

- New buildings can include natural gas if they are more efficient and offset their use in an existing building.
- Planned housing units that are in construction, will apply for a building permit in 2019, or are part of a vested development are exempt. These units may include natural gas and will be built in phases over the next several years.
- Natural gas plumbing and appliances for cooking in commercial kitchens are exempt.
- In addition to various other exemptions for public health and safety, the Clean Energy Choice Program includes a Public Interest Exemption, which allows the permitting authority to exempt projects should unexpected or unintended effects of the program arise.

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Are Avila Ranch and San Luis Ranch exempt?

Avila Ranch and San Luis Ranch agreed to comply with the Clean Energy Choice Program

- Cities and developers sometimes negotiate “development agreements” to make sure community benefits of large projects are optimized.
- The City of San Luis Obispo negotiated development agreements with both Avila Ranch and San Luis Ranch to ensure benefits related to transportation, land conservation, and environmental concerns (among other things) were provided.
- Each projects’ development agreement includes a provision to comply with the citywide policies outlined in the Clean Energy Choice Program.

How else can we reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve our community?

The Clean Energy Choice Program is just one effort to reduce emissions and support future focused and cost-effective buildings. The City will continue to implement its 2019-2021 Major City Goal Work programs, which includes many efforts to reduce pollution and increase affordability and local quality of life, such as:

- Improve the ability to easily move around town for pedestrians, cyclists, bus riders, and drivers
- Continue to support development of affordable housing
- Enhance and grow the City’s open spaces
- Work with Monterey Bay Community Power to purchase carbon free electricity for the City
- Develop solar projects on City properties
- Develop a program to help homes and businesses voluntarily install solar panels and retrofit space heating and water heating appliances