WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED TOGETHER

Homes and buildings are Oregon’s second-largest source of climate and air pollution, predominantly from burning methane gas and other fossil fuels. They’re also our first line of defense against climate-fueled harms like extreme heat and wildfire smoke.

OCAP included important directives for the BCD to adopt new standards to increase the energy efficiency for our homes and buildings; ODOE to increase energy efficiency standards for appliances; and the PUC to prioritize proceedings and activities that advance decarbonization in the utility sector, and exercise its broad statutory authority to reduce GHG pollution, support energy affordability, and ensure system reliability and resource adequacy. All have the potential to save Oregonians money on energy bills and create healthier living environments for people across the state.

During the 2021 legislative session, OCAP advocates successfully secured legislation (HB 2062) to approve ODOE energy efficiency standard updates for 11 different products. ODOE estimates these standards will cut nearly 50,000 metric tons of carbon pollution annually by 2025, and over 100,000 metric tons of carbon pollution annually by 2035, just by making sure more efficient products are available when it comes time to replace them. HB 2062 also provided ODOE with a clear pathway to make periodic updates to appliance efficiency standards, which will deliver even more benefits.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS

Unfortunately, BCD and its advisory boards again passed up opportunities this year to advance energy efficiency improvements through building code updates. At the same time, BCD boards continue to lack needed diversity to ensure adequate representation and voices are at the table to drive equitable, community-centered decision-making.

In addition, while OCAP advocates are pleased that PUC has made progress on its “Natural Gas Fact Finding” proceeding (UM 2178), more work is needed to effectively assess the climate and energy efficiency impacts of fossil “natural” gas heating and cooling of homes and buildings and the potential impacts to ratepayers of continuing to rely on and expand fossil gas infrastructure.

KEY DATA

$30 million in annual energy cost savings by 2025 and nearly $100 million in savings by 2035 thanks to ODOE’s new energy efficiency standards.

More than 100 people died across 28 Oregon cities during last summer’s unprecedented climate-fueled heat wave; the majority of who passed away did not have access to life-saving cooling devices.

$25 million approved by the legislature to protect people against extreme heat by providing electric heat pumps to environmental justice communities in Oregon.

Electric heat pumps save Oregon consumers $2,000 to $3,000 when compared to gas furnaces.
“Drought, fire and other climate disruptions put the most vulnerable Oregonians at great risk. By investing in resilient homes and clean energy, we can build safer and healthier communities, reduce the cost of energy for consumers, and create good-paying jobs.”

– Oregon State Senator Kate Lieber, Senate Committee on Energy and Environment Chair.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS

We cannot wait to act to protect our communities and ensure all homes are resilient. Policymakers must take action in the coming year to rapidly reduce pollution from the buildings sector, by supporting cleaner, energy efficient, and affordable homes and buildings for all Oregonians. Specifically, we are eager to see progress on the following:

Legislature and state agencies adopt comprehensive policy solutions advancing cleaner, healthier, more efficient and affordable homes and buildings.

BCD advances strong updates to the residential, commercial, and Reach building codes to achieve the OCAP-directed requirement to reduce energy use 60% compared to 2006 Oregon residential and commercial codes.

BCD, the Governor, and the legislature work together to improve the public process around development of the building codes, including ensuring more diverse representation on BCD advisory boards.

OPUC advances strong regulations to strategically curb the gas system while protecting low-income ratepayers, including revoking ratepayer-funded gas line extension allowances and replacing all incentives for new gas hookups and appliances with those for electric alternatives.

$221,326,511 in Oregon health impacts in 2017 due to burning fossil fuels in buildings.