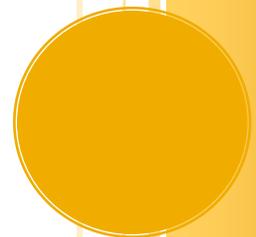


# CALIFORNIA ENERGY JUSTICE SNAPSHOT



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People,  
Environmental and Climate Justice Program

5/1/2017



# CALIFORNIA ENERGY JUSTICE

## SNAPSHOT

### SUMMARY

Access to clean energy is not just an environmental issue, but also a civil right. Communities of color bear disproportionate burdens of from the consequences of a fossil fuel based energy economy. This is why the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program stands for just energy policies that protect our communities from harmful energy production practices and provide equitable access to the clean energy economy.

This Snapshot profiles California's energy portfolio, evaluates key state energy policies, documents state utility disconnection policies, and outlines opportunities in the clean energy economy. It also provides information that will inform NAACP members and leaders on potential avenues for further engagement and future action steps towards a clean, just energy future.



Figure 1:  
<http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/articles/2014/06/landmark-legislation-could-put-geothermal-back-on-track-for-california.html>

### STATE ENERGY PROFILE

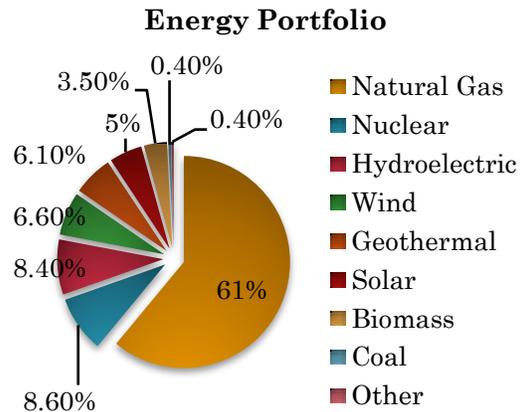
California is known for its progressive environmental policies, but to what extent does the state energy landscape live up to this reputation? While the state has made some great strides towards the clean and just energy future we need, there is still work to be done. According to [recent studies](#), eight of the nation's ten cities where air pollution is worst are in California.<sup>1</sup> This section will provide an overview of California's current energy portfolio, highlight key state energy policies, and indicate potential clean energy infrastructure and policy solutions.

## State Energy Portfolio

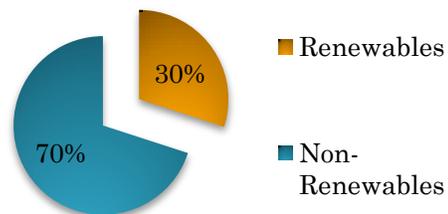
While California's large economy includes many energy-intensive industries, **the state still has one of the lowest per capita total energy consumption levels in the country.** This is due in part to California state policies that promote energy efficiency practices and technological innovation.

California is rich in energy resources, which includes both renewable and non-renewable sources. Although the state is endowed with significant renewable energy potential and has passed progressive clean energy policies, California still relies primarily on fossil fuels to meet energy needs. **About three-fifths of California's utility-scale net electricity generation is fueled by natural gas-fired power plants.** Second to natural gas is nuclear power, a nonrenewable energy source, which the NAACP does not support.

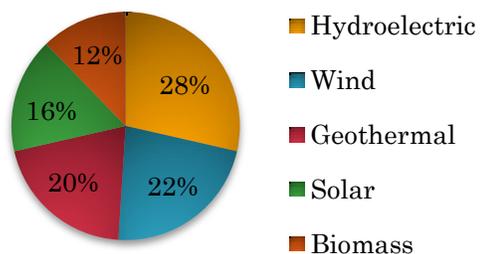
Hydroelectricity is California's largest renewable energy source. While current hydroelectric infrastructure has the potential to supply a quarter of the state's energy needs, prolonged drought has reduced that energy supply significantly in recent years. **California leads the nation in net electricity generation from solar, geothermal, and biomass.** California also ranks fourth in the nation for generation of wind energy. About one-tenth of California's total net generation is provided by solar power. Despite the state's strides in renewable energy development, **there is significant potential to drastically increase California's renewable energy portfolio and to make sure the benefits of renewable resources are reaching our communities.**<sup>ii</sup>



### Renewables vs. Non-Renewables



### Renewable Energy Portfolio



Figures 2-4: <http://spotforcleanenergy.org/state/california/>

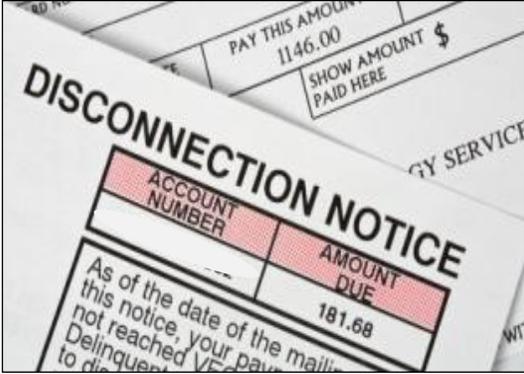
For more detailed information and data on California's energy portfolio visit the U.S. Energy Information Administration's webpage:

<http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=CA>

## State Energy Policies<sup>iii</sup>

Policy Type	NAACP Recommended Policy Standards	California Policy Details
Net Metering	<p>Net Metering Standards require utility companies to provide retail credit for new renewable energy produced by a consumer.</p> <p><b>Capacity Limit Recommendation:</b> 2,000 kW (minimally), per system</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p><b>California has a mandatory net metering policy</b> requiring electric utility companies to provide retail credit for up to 1,000 kW for most systems, and 5,000 kW for university systems. Beginning July 1, 2017 or when the utility has reached its net metering limit, the utility must offer a standard contract or tariff.</p>
Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS)	<p>A RPS requires electric utility companies and other retail electric providers to supply a specific minimum amount of customer load with electricity from eligible renewable energy sources.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 25% renewable by 2025</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p> <p><b>Allowable Sources:</b> Wind, solar, geothermal, ocean/wave energy</p>	<p>California's mandatory renewable energy standard was extended to 50% by 2030.</p>
Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS)	<p>A EERS establish a requirement for utility companies to meet annual and cumulative energy savings targets through a portfolio of energy efficiency program.</p> <p><b>Recommended Standard:</b> Minimally 2% annual reduction of each previous year's retail electricity sales.</p> <p><b>Mandatory/Voluntary:</b> Mandatory</p>	<p><b>California's mandatory energy efficiency standards vary per utility.</b> The EERS mandates separate electricity savings and demand reduction requirements and energy savings requirements for each of the utility companies.</p> <p>Mandated requirements can be found here: <a href="http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/detail/4515">http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program/detail/4515</a></p>
Local Hire Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra renewable energy credit multipliers for in-state installation and in-state manufactured content</li> <li>• Renewable energy credits for utility providing incentives to build a plant in-state</li> <li>• Renewable energy credit for utility that makes an investment in a plant located in-state</li> <li>• Quota for government assisted construction project employers to hire a percentage of workers locally</li> <li>• Bidding Preferences for companies that hire a percentage of their employees in-state for state-funded public works projects and service contracts</li> </ul>	<p>San Francisco has a First Source Program that requires all entities contracted with government funds to prioritize hiring economically disadvantaged residents.</p> <p>Establishing a statewide Local Hire Provision that encompasses energy projects would significantly increase the amount of tax dollars that California reinvests in the local economy and provide jobs enabling people to work near where they live.</p>
Minority Business Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training opportunities</li> <li>• Notify MBEs of state business opportunities</li> <li>• Set-aside funds for MBEs</li> </ul>	<p>California requires that 15% of every dollar spent on construction, services, equipment, supplies, etc. must go to MBEs.</p> <p><b>This is one of the nation's most progressive MBE provisions.</b> Expansion of the program to include women-owned business enterprises could further spur economic development for traditionally disenfranchised businesses.</p>

Utility Disconnection Policies <sup>iv</sup>	
<b>Notice</b>	Notice must be sent fifteen days before the scheduled disconnection.
<b>Date Based Protection</b>	None
<b>Temp Based Protection</b>	None
<b>Payment Plan</b>	Yes, available to customers with a medical certification.
<b>Reconnection Fee</b>	No
<b>Disconnection Limitations</b>	No disconnection may take place with medical certification that a disconnection is life threatening to the customer. Customer must enter into a payment plan.
<b>Other Protections</b>	No disconnection due to reduction in household income as a result of a member of the household being called to active duty station in the military.



Access to electricity is not a luxury, it's a necessity. **Folks should not be forced to choose between paying for medications or their energy bill.**

Public officials have implemented some policies that protect consumers from the life-threatening practice of utility disconnection, however, energy justice advocates must continue to hold utility companies and regulators accountable to human rights and basic but life-saving protections. Utility customers with limited income are at a higher risk of having their utilities disconnected due to nonpayment. This is due, in part, to the nature of utility payments. Utility costs often make up a larger portion of expenses for households with limited extra income.

To learn more about utility disconnection policies, check out the NAACP Report:

[\*Lights Out in the Cold: Reforming Utility Shut-off Policies as if Human Rights Matter\*](#)

- Know your rights! More details about disconnection policies are available through the California Public Utility Commission: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/energy/>
- For more information about ongoing advocacy efforts to remove the ills of utility disconnections, check out the California-based organization [Turn: the Utility Reform Network](#).

## DEVELOPING THE BLACK-GREEN PIPELINE

African Americans are inadequately represented in the clean energy sector. It is the goal of the NAACP Black-Green Pipeline Initiative that African Americans will have increased representation across all sectors of the clean energy economy. The Black-Green Pipeline Initiative promotes the equitable inclusion of communities of color into the green economy in order to address unemployment in our communities and to increase the voices and influence of our communities in the green economy.

To subscribe to the Black-Green Pipeline Initiative Weekly Digest send a blank email to:  
[naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:naacp-bgp-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

### The Green Labor Market and Communities of Color

According to a [recent report](#) by the U.S. Department of Energy, California has an average concentration of energy employment, with 427,614 persons employed in the traditional energy sector and another 301,348 in the energy efficiency sector statewide.<sup>v</sup>



### *Unemployment*

In 2015 the gap between the U.S. unemployment rate and the rate for African Americans was 4.3 percentage points. *In California the unemployment rate for African Americans was 4.8 points higher than the overall state unemployment rate.*

**2015 National Unemployment Rate: 5.3%**  
**2015 California Unemployment Rate: 6.2%**  
**2015 National African American Unemployment Rate: 9.6%**  
**2015 California African American Unemployment Rate: 11%**

vi

Renewable energy is driving economic growth and creating jobs in communities across California. Solar energy employs far more than any other electric power technology. And this sector continues to grow. In fact, from 2015 to 2016 there was a 25% increase in employment in the solar energy sector nationwide and a 32% increase in California. With the continued expansion of the solar energy economy, employment opportunities in the solar workforce are expected to continue to grow. In 2016, there were 100,050 jobs in the California solar energy sector, up from 75,598 in 2015, according to the [solar jobs census](#). African Americans however, are underrepresented in the California solar workforce, making up only 4.4% of the solar workforce in 2016.<sup>vii</sup>

*Check out the 2016 Solar Jobs Census, which includes a profile of California, here:*

<https://solarstates.org/#state/california/counties/solar-jobs/2016>

## TAKE ACTION

In a state already in the lead in terms of clean energy, California NAACP can be a leader in ensuring that state energy policies are just and equitable. Remember: a transition to clean energy is inevitable, but justice is not! The California NAACP must ensure that the communities it represents not only have a seat at the table, but also are positioned as leaders in shaping the energy policies and practices that affect our communities. Below are action steps branches can take:

### Host a Bridging the Gap: Connecting Black Communities to the Green Economy Roundtable

- The NAACP ECJ Program is committed to advancing a meaningful dialogue and concerted action on engagement of communities of color in the green economy.
- To start taking action, organize a multi-stakeholder roundtable with socially responsible energy business leaders, historically black colleges and universities, environmental groups, civil rights organizations, labor unions, and others to discuss developing and implementing a strategy to ensure that policies/laws/regulation, research initiatives, community level practices, corporate social responsibility measures, etc. are in place to ensure greater engagement of communities of color in the green economy.

### Implement a demonstration project such as a community solar garden or rooftop solar project

- Interested in taking a direct role in implementing clean energy practices in your community? Install rooftop solar or community solar.
- There are several rebates and incentives available to Californians interested in pursuing renewable energy projects. Visit [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov) for a list of renewable energy incentive program available on the state and federal levels.
- You can also check out funding opportunities offered through the Department of Energy SunShot Initiative, which aims to support solar energy adoption by making solar energy accessible to all Americans.

### Launch a Just Energy Policies Campaign

- Identify one or more of the focal policies outlined in this snapshot and documented more extensively in the Just Energy Policies to champion.
- Build a coalition with likeminded energy justice advocates and other local and state allies to build power and momentum.
- Host a town-hall to educate the community about the policy and get input from members on their needs, priorities, and perspectives.
- Launch an intentional campaign to advocate that California adopts the recommended policy standard.
- Set up lobby trainings and coordinate a lobby-day with elected officials.

### Make public the NAACP energy justice platform and engage the public through media

- Develop and place an op-ed by NAACP Unit President or ECJ Chair in a local newspaper
- Participate in a radio interview, TV interview, podcast
- Be quoted in a local newspaper
- Post an article or blog to an online platform

**California Environmental Justice Alliance:** statewide coalition of grassroots environmental justice organizations.

**Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice:** dedicated to bringing people together to improve both our natural and social environments.

**Environmental Health Coalition:** works to improve the well being of families and children in low-income communities of color in the San Diego/Tijuana region.

**Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment:** provides legal, organizing, and technical assistance to grassroots groups in low-income communities and communities of color.

**Communities for a Better Environment:** works with low-income Latino and African American communities in Oakland, Richmond, Wilmington, and Huntington Park.

**Asian Pacific Environmental Network:** develops the leadership and power of low-income Asian immigrant and refugee communities to fight for environmental, social, and economic justice.

**People Organizing to Demand Environmental and Economic Rights:** organizes Latino immigrant families to address environmental injustices and implement solutions to achieve healthy, sustainable communities.

**Movement Generation Justice and Ecology Project:** rooted in vibrant social movements led by low-income communities and communities of color committed to a Just Transition away from profit and pollution and towards healthy, resilient and life-affirming local economies.

## CLOSING

Today there is unprecedented urgency for climate action and a just transition to clean renewable energy. The State of California is a national leader in clean energy. In order to achieve energy justice, state energy policies and practices must not only be clean, but also equitable. Justice must be centered in our energy transition.

Embracing a transition to clean, renewable energy sources will not only provide significant environmental and health benefits for Californians, but it will also diversify and strengthen the state's renewable energy economy. NAACP Just Energy Leaders should advocate on behalf of a strong Renewable Portfolio Standard, Energy Efficiency Resource Standard, and Net Metering standards as well as economic empowerment provisions such as local hire policies and minority business programs. Our communities have the potential to be key leaders facilitating a just transition to clean, renewable, locally owned and controlled energy.

*Need additional support, resources, or other assistance?*

Contact: [ecjp@naacpnet.org](mailto:ecjp@naacpnet.org)



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**Created by the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program**

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, MD 21215

(410) 580-5777

ecjp@naacpnet.org

www.naacp.org

*Contributing Authors:*

Lorah Steichen, Regional Environmental and Climate Justice Fellow, Region I, NAACP

*Editor:*

Marcus Franklin, Program Specialist, Environmental and Climate Justice, NAACP

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<sup>i</sup> Zoe Schlanger, "California is home to eight of the 10 cities in America where air pollution is worst," *Quartz*, 19 April 2017, <https://qz.com/963089/california-is-home-to-eight-of-the-10-cities-in-america-where-air-pollution-is-worst/>.

<sup>ii</sup> "California State Profile and Energy Estimates," *United State Energy Information Administration*, last modified on 20 October 2016, <https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=CA>.

<sup>iii</sup> "Programs," *DSIRE*, accessed 11 July 2017, <http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program?fromSir=0&state=CA>.

<sup>iv</sup> Jacqueline Patterson, Marcus Franklin, Caroline Kurtz, Mike Alksnis, Lorah Steichen, Chiquita Younger, "Lights Out In the Cold: Reforming Shut-Off Policies as if Human Rights Matter," *NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice Program*, March 2017, [http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold\\_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf](http://www.naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Lights-Out-in-the-Cold_NAACP-ECJP-4.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> "2017 US Energy and Jobs Report State Charts," *United States Department of Energy*, accessed 11 July 2017, <https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/2017%20US%20Energy%20and%20Jobs%20Report%20State%20Charts%200.pdf>.

<sup>vi</sup> "Unemployment rates for African Americans by state in 2015," *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, last modified 4 March 2016, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2016/unemployment-rates-for-african-americans-by-state-in-2015.htm>.

<sup>vii</sup> "Solar Jobs Census 2016," *The Solar Foundation*, 2017, <https://solarstates.org/#state/arizona/counties/solar-jobs/2016>.