



Energy Blog

Storm Safety Tips

This winter Southern California residents have seen several sweeping storms. Southern California Edison (SCE) wants to remind its customers that outages may occur and to stay 100 feet away from downed power lines. Here are some safety tips to keep in mind in case of a power outage:

- Watch for traffic signals that may be out. Approach those intersections as four-way stops.
- Make sure you have a battery-operated radio and flashlights. Check the batteries to make sure they are fresh. Use flashlights for lighting during a power outage; do not use candles because they may pose a significant fire hazard.
- Do not use any equipment inside that is designed for outdoor heating or cooking. Such equipment can emit carbon monoxide and other toxic gases.
- If you use a generator, place it outdoors and plug individual appliances directly into it, using a heavy-duty extension cord. Connecting generators directly to household circuits creates “back-feed,” which is dangerous to repair crews.
- Leave the doors of your refrigerator and freezer closed to keep food as fresh as possible. Place blocks of ice inside to help keep food cold. Check food carefully for signs of spoilage.
- Check on your neighbors to make sure everyone is safe.

Customers may report outages at 1-800- 611-1911, online and through [sce.com/outages](https://www.sce.com/outages).

Fri, Mar 1, 2024



Energy Blog

California's Power by Hils Romellon (Page 1 of 2)

This week's blog is written by Hils Romellon, one of CAP OC's Planning department interns. Hils is a fourth-year public health policy major at the University of California Irvine; her minor is in health informatics. She is a first-generation Mexican American and a first-generation college student. As a public health student, Hils said, "I've learned so much about all the different elements that impact the public's health, and climate change issues has been a topic that I've grown interest in."

California is home to more than 39 million people. Being one of the most populous states in the US, the state has enough energy to power homes and businesses for its entire population.

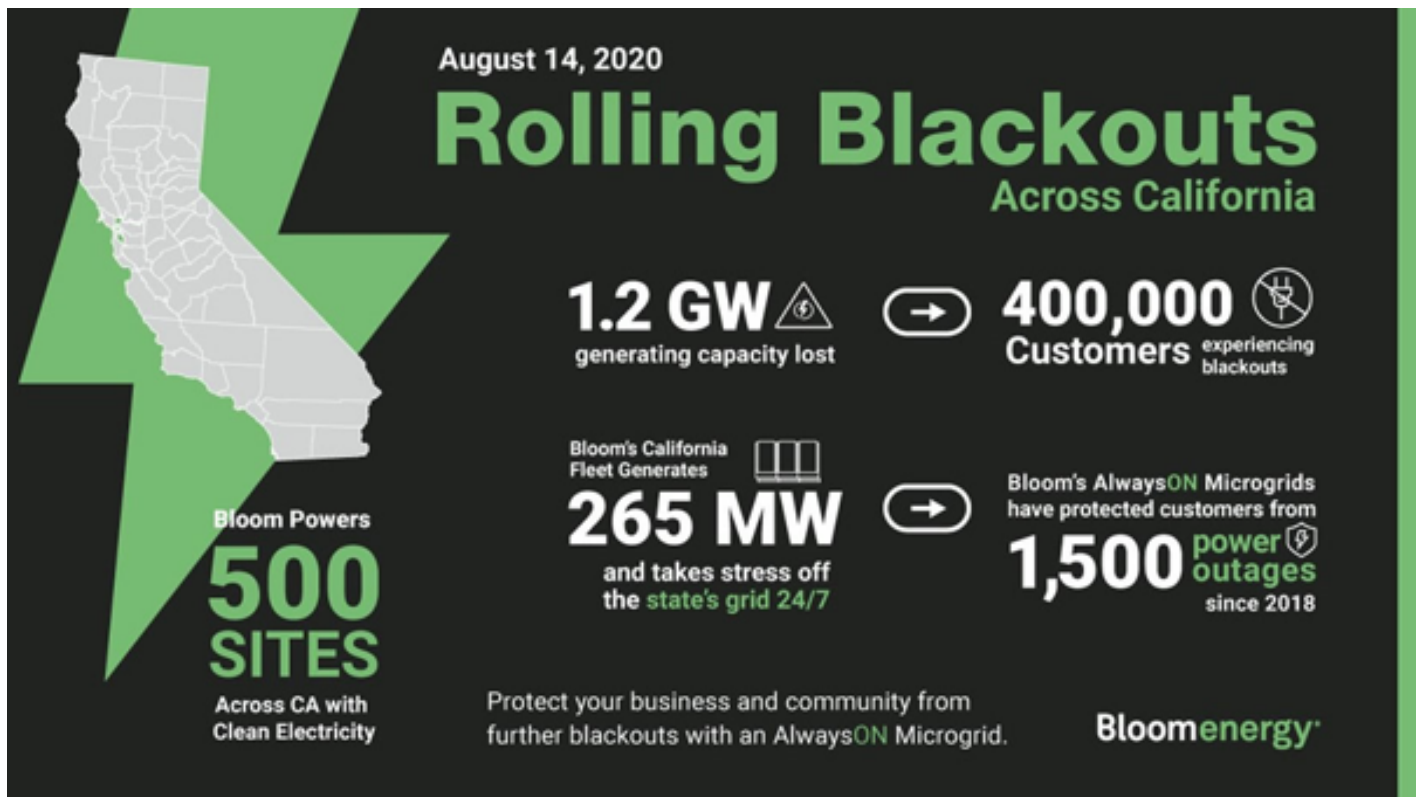
With summers getting hotter every year, this takes a toll on the state's energy. In August of 2020, the third hottest August recorded in the US (1), California's 3 largest utility companies had to shut off electricity for a few hours over 2 consecutive days. Due to the extreme temperatures, the state's power grid was overwhelmed, resulting in hundreds of thousands of homes to be left without power.

The state's Governor, Gavin Newsom, is rapidly and aggressively moving the state away from fossil fuels, making solar and wind some of the state's main sources for power. Given the extreme hot weather California faces, blackouts become a concern, but officials try to prevent them by encouraging people to save energy in many ways. Power shut-offs for 2021 and 2022 were avoided through alerting people to

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California's Power by Hils Romellon... continued (Page 2 of 2)

conserve energy and tapping emergency gas-powered generators (2).



Source: [Bloomenergy](#)

But this fear of running out of power did cause for California to be set back on its climate goal of being 100% clean energy by 2045. Extending the life of gas-fired power plants helped maintain the power on throughout the state as we were going through extreme heat and possible blackout, but it did create a major setback. An estimate for the state claims that California will now need to deploy renewable energy 5 times faster to meet the goal of being 100% clean energy by 2045 (3). This will become a challenging task due to the other issues California faces such as wildfires, droughts, and rising temperatures.

Sources: (1) [Summer 2020 ranked as one of the hottest on record for U.S.](#)

(2) [California unlikely to run short of electricity this summer thanks to storms, new power sources](#)

(3) [California's latest power grid problems are just the beginning](#)

(4) [Overcoming an Energy Crisis: Innovating During a Blackout](#)



Energy Blog

DIY: Air Seal Your Home to Combat Winter Drafts (Page 1 of 2)



Do you feel cold drafts in your home? You can get rid of drafts by finding the air leaks in your home and sealing them up yourself. Air sealing is one of the easiest things you can do to improve thermal comfort in your home.

You can find the air leaks in your home by:

1. Inspect common leak sites such as gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets, electrical outlets, switch plates, door and window frames, electrical and gas service entrances, baseboards, weather stripping around doors, fireplace dampers and attic hatches.
2. Light an incense stick and carefully pass it around the edges of the abovementioned areas. When the smoke wavers or is sucked out or blown into the room, that's where the draft is.

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DIY: Air Seal Your Home to Combat Winter Drafts... continued (Page 2 of 2)

3. You can also place a damp hand in these areas. Any drafts should generate a cooling sensation.
4. You can conduct a DIY pressurization test
5. You can use a flashlight

You can seal the air leaks by:

1. Caulking and weatherstripping doors and windows that leak air
2. Caulking and sealing air leaks where plumbing, ducting or electrical wiring comes through walls, floors, ceilings and soffits over cabinets
3. Installing foam gaskets behind outlet and switch plates on walls
4. Sealing leaks with low-expansion spray foam; install house flashing if needed
5. Using foam sealant on larger gaps around windows and baseboards
6. Checking your dryer vent to make sure it is not blocked
7. Keeping the fireplace flue damper tightly closed when not in use
8. Sealing air leaks around fireplace chimneys, furnaces and gas-fired water heater vents with fire-resistant materials such as sheet metal or sheetrock and furnace cement caulk

Not a Do-It-Yourselfer?? Call 714-839-6199 or email energy@capoc.org to sign up for our Weatherization program and get a professional energy audit with a blower door test to detect all of the air leaks in your home and let our team do the sealing.

Source: [Energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



Energy Blog

Taking On Climate Change One Step at a Time: Reformation of Transportation by Hils Romellon (page 1 of 2)

This week's blog is written by Hils Romellon, one of CAP OC's Planning department interns. Hils is a fourth-year public health policy major at the University of California Irvine; her minor is in health informatics. She is a first-generation Mexican American and a first-generation college student. As a public health student, Hils said, "I've learned so much about all the different elements that impact the public's health, and climate change issues has been a topic that I've grown interest in."

276 million (1) cars hit the road every day in California. 2.9 million (2) of those being on the roads here in Orange County (OC). With an average of one pound of carbon dioxide being released per mile driven, imagine all the CO2 emitted in a single morning here in OC.

Every morning people get in their cars and drive to work, school, appointments or wherever they need to be. The transportation sector in the US is the largest source of emissions of CO2, which is the most common greenhouse gas (3). As we have become more conscious of the dangers of climate change, we are finding ways to combat climate change effectively while still being aware of the rapid population growth.

Carpooling and public transportation have been advocated as a great way to help reduce CO2 emissions but there's issues with that. Carpooling is not the most efficient for people due to scheduling conflicts and coordination. If the driver is running late,

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Taking On Climate Change One Step at a Time: Reformation of Transportation... continued (Page 2 of 3)

then the person carpooling is also late which places more responsibility on the driver. While it can be efficient during certain times, it is not the most reliable solution for climate change.

Another alternative to driving individually is public transportation. It allows people to get where they need to be while emitting less greenhouse gasses than individual cars. This is a great solution to our transportation sector contributing to climate change issue yet there are major issues that discourage people from taking public transportation. One of the main issues that discourage people from using public transportation is safety concerns. Serious crime such as robbery and assault went up 24% compared to 2022. There needs to be a serious reformation of our public transportation as it reduced CO2 emissions by 45%. Public transport would result in 37 million metric tons of CO2 to be saved here in the US annually and an estimated 6-14 million tons given an increase in bike use.

With the increase in electric vehicles, which don't release CO2, new buses are being made that are either electric or run on clean energy. Many countries are stepping up to combat climate change as it is a global issue. Looking at a city in North East Scotland, Aberdeen is the first to have hydrogen powered double deckers which releases zero emission (4).



Source: [First Bus](#)

Taking On Climate Change One Step at a Time: Reformation of Transportation... continued (Page 3 of 3)

Public transportation would not only help reduce climate change since it targets the largest CO2 sector, but it would also increase our quality of life. With more trains and busses available, it would result in less cars on the road which would lead to fewer roads being made, increasing the walkability of the cities (5). It would allow people to be able to bike a lot more safely and walk to their destination without the need of a car. People would be able to bike and walk which would increase their mobility, improving their health.

Sources: (1) [Car Ownership Statistics in the US](#)

(2) [Estimated Vehicles Registered by County](#)

(3) [Emissions of Carbon Dioxide in the Transportation Sector](#)

(4) [Aberdeen, home to the World's First Hydrogen Powered Double Deckers!](#)

(5) [5 Environmental Benefits of Sustainable Transportation](#)



Energy Blog

The numbers are in! Here is our Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program impact for Orange County in 2023:

2023 LIHEAP IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Total LIHEAP Payment Assistance Benefits Disbursed in 2023

\$4,749,424.69

5,275

Total number of low-income households that received LIHEAP benefits in 2023

2,971

households received assistance to prevent disconnection or to restore utility services

ONLY 5%

of the eligible population in California receive assistance due to limited funding



4,540

persons 60 years of age or older



1,061

children 5 years of age & under



1,956

persons living with a disability

\$22,297

Average yearly household income

3

Average household size

\$215.63

Average household monthly energy cost

\$900.36

Average payment assistance benefit amount



2,009

households received Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program benefits totaling

\$1,483,449

WATER

441

Homes Weatherized

&

\$3.8M

Direct Investment in Weatherization Services



Every \$1 spent on Home Weatherization returns \$1.72 in energy benefits and \$2.78 in health and safety benefits

Fri, Mar 29, 2024