

# SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

*The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy, Resilient, and Just America*

## Decarbonizing the Building Sector

Decarbonizing buildings presents both a substantial economic opportunity and a complex challenge. The United States is home to 125 million homes and 5 million commercial buildings that use an enormous amount of electricity. Residential and commercial buildings are responsible for about 40% of U.S. energy use. Low- and moderate-income Americans spend a greater percentage of their household budgets on energy costs and often live in less efficient homes.

Making America's homes and commercial buildings more energy efficient and less polluting will require a massive, sustained investment to reach all communities and the millions of buildings that vary in age, size, purpose, ownership, and use.



## BUILD AND UPGRADE HOMES AND BUSINESSES TO MAXIMIZE ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND ELIMINATE EMISSIONS

Because states and local governments largely have authority over the design and construction of buildings, the federal government can best facilitate building decarbonization by providing financial incentives and technical support, while setting goals and requirements for the federal building stock. These policies will boost local economic development, create high-quality, good-paying jobs, and improve quality of life, especially for disproportionately exposed, frontline, and vulnerable communities.

### CONGRESS SHOULD:

**Eliminate emissions from new buildings by 2030** by requiring federal buildings to follow net-zero-emission building codes and incentivizing states and cities to adopt net-zero codes.

**Weatherize every home in America** by substantially increasing funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program and increasing homeowner incentives for energy efficiency.

**Invest in energy-efficient public buildings and communities** by increasing funding for the State Energy Program and reauthorizing the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program.

**Increase the availability of energy-efficient, affordable housing** by increasing funding for energy-efficient public, federally assisted, and unsubsidized multifamily housing.

**Drive energy retrofits of commercial buildings and businesses** through tax incentives, a small business energy efficiency grant program, and commercial building benchmarking requirements.

**Boost onsite clean energy generation and beneficial electrification** by increasing tax incentives and rebates and establishing model standards and codes.

**Reduce emissions from building materials** by incentivizing building reuse, requiring federal use of performance-based construction specifications, and establishing green building material databases and labels.

**Demonstrate federal leadership in building efficiency** by setting ambitious energy and emissions reduction targets, requiring deep energy retrofits, and increasing federal use of energy savings performance contracting.