

Advanced Energy Communities Symposium
Thursday, February 19, 2026 | 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM
The California Endowment | 2000 Franklin Street, Oakland

9:00 - 10:00 AM – Registration, Networking, Refreshments - Lobby

10:00 AM – Welcome & Overview - Laurel (first floor)

- **Welcome & Agenda Overview:** Ellie Cohen, The Climate Center; Richard Schorske, ZNE Alliance

10:10 AM – Opening Address - Laurel

- **Advanced Energy Communities – Design, Results, & the Way Forward:** Erik Stokes, Senior Advisor to CEC Commissioner Gallardo

10:30 AM – AEC Project Highlights and Lessons Learned - Laurel

- **Moderator:** Anthony Ng, Manager, Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Branch, CEC
- **Bassett – Avocado Heights Advanced Energy Community** (Los Angeles County) – The Energy Coalition (Genaro Bugarin, TEC)
- **Oakland EcoBlock** – California Institute for Energy and Environment at UC Berkeley (Therese Pepper, CIEE)
- **Lancaster Advanced Energy Community** – ZNE Alliance with City of Lancaster (Richard Schorske, ZNEA)
- **Richmond Advanced Energy Community** – ZNE Alliance with MCE (Chris Sentieri, CEER)

12:00 – Lunch

12:45 PM – AEC Strategies and the Affordability Challenge - Laurel

- **Moderator:** Ram Narayanamurthy, CEC
- **Panelists:** Richard Schorske, ZNEA; Laurel Rothschild, TEC; Rich Brown, CIEE; Alexandra McGee, MCE

1:45 PM – Break

2:00 PM – Pathways to AEC Deployment - [Breakouts]

Community and Customer Engagement - Elmhurst (second floor)

- **Moderator:** Anna Tackaberry, MCE
- **Customer & Partner Engagement Lessons Learned** (Alexandra McGee, MCE)

- **Opening Doors to Partnership: Lessons from Low-Income Home Decarbonization** (Natalie Espinoza, TEC)
- **Block Engagement and Association Formation** (Therese Pepper, CIEE)
- **Zero Net Carbon Ready Homes and Social Impact Bonds** (Jim Becker, Richmond Community Foundation)

Microgrid & DER Network Barriers and Opportunities – Technology, Policy, and Regulation - Eastmont (second floor)

- **Moderator:** Richard Schorske, ZNEA
- **Community Solar Aggregation and Microgrid Challenges** (Genaro Bugarin, TEC)
- **Community-Owned Neighborhood Microgrids** (Rich Brown, CIEE)
- **Community Microgrid Operator Framework – Legislative vs. Ballot Approaches** (Allie Detrio, Reimagine Power)

Business Models and Community Value Creation – Advanced Demand Side Management & Distributed Energy Resource Strategies - Uptown (first floor)

- **Moderator:** Chris Sentieri, CEER
- **CCAs as Demand Response Providers** (Sam Irvine, MCE)
- **Enterprise DERMS Platforms for CCA-operated VPPs** (Mark Lane, Serious Controls)
- **Value of Transactive Energy: Under The Hood of a Prosumer Network** (Marc Costa, TEC)
- **Advanced Performance Evaluation for Dynamic Demand Flexibility** (Colman Snaith, TRC)
- **Affordably Delivering Whole-Home Retrofits and Solar** (Kate Ringness, Former Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the US Department of Energy)

3:30 PM – Break

3:45 PM – AEC Policy & Program Deployment Strategies - The Road Ahead - Laurel

- **Moderator:** Kurt Johnson, The Climate Center
- **Putting it All Together: Thoughts on AEC Acceleration** (Richard Schorske, ZNEA)
- **Project Teams Perspectives on AEC** (Chris Sentieri, CEER; Therese Pepper, CIEE/UC Berkeley; Genaro Bugarin, TEC)
- **Audience Input on AEC Policy, Program Development, and Deployment Strategies**
- **In Closing:** CEC Commissioner Andrew McAllister

4:30 PM – Adjourn for Drinks & Networking at DREXL (382 19th St, Oakland, CA 94612)