Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP)

20 strong years of accomplishments

2001–2021
Due in large part to SWEEP’s advocacy efforts, funding for electric utility energy efficiency and demand-side management (DSM) programs in the region increased from about $21 million per year in 2001 to about $375 million per year in 2020.

The annual energy savings from electric utility DSM programs in the region increased from 625 gigawatt-hours (GWh) per year in 2006 to 2300 GWh per year in 2020. SWEEP has helped utilities expand the scope and increase the impact of their efficiency programs, including increasing efforts to assist income-qualified households and historically underserved communities.

Households and businesses in the region are expected save about $7.6 billion as a result of utility energy efficiency programs implemented in the region over the past 10 years. Much of these savings would not have been realized without SWEEP’s efforts.

Southwestern utilities and states are implementing a number of innovative energy efficiency programs proposed by SWEEP, including programs to support multifamily housing retrofits, advanced LED lighting, connected smart thermostats, heat pumps and heat pump water heaters, and Strategic Energy Management.

The region has avoided the need for ten large baseload power plants as a result of utility energy efficiency programs implemented over the past decade. These energy efficiency programs also prevented about 80 million tons of CO2 emissions during the past decade, as well as reducing other pollutants.

States in the region have enacted over 130 laws that SWEEP proposed or influenced. These laws:
- scaled up utility efficiency programs;
- strengthened building energy codes;
- imposed minimum efficiency standards on light bulbs and other products;
- offered tax incentives to encourage construction of highly efficient buildings, building retrofits, or the purchase of electric vehicles (EVs);
- established commercial building performance standards;
- expanded energy efficiency assistance for income-qualified households;
- set energy savings goals for public buildings; and
- established new energy efficiency financing mechanisms.
Arizona adopted some of the strongest energy efficiency requirements for investor-owned electric utilities in the nation, requiring electricity savings of 20% by 2020. SWEEP actively supported this policy and helped prevent it from being weakened.

The states of Utah and New Mexico as well as most larger municipalities in Arizona, Nevada, and Colorado adopted the 2018 version of the International Energy Conservation Code. SWEEP played a key role in educating policy makers about the benefits of state-of-the-art building energy codes.

With input and leadership from SWEEP, Colorado adopted minimum energy and water efficiency standards on 15 residential and commercial products sold in the state.

SWEEP has played a leading role in convincing states such as Colorado as well as major municipalities and utilities in the region to support beneficial electrification in buildings.

In large part due to SWEEP’s efforts, Colorado adopted over a dozen laws to promote purchase of EVs and to enable cities and counties to invest a portion of their gasoline tax revenue in mass transit systems and non-motorized transport. Utah adopted four laws to promote the purchase of EVs and investment in charging infrastructure, and Nevada and New Mexico also passed laws promoting utility investment in charging infrastructure.

SWEEP played a large role in the development of the REV West MOU, a cooperative agreement among eight western states to invest in EV charging infrastructure along all of the interstate highways linking the states. SWEEP successfully advocated for four states (Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah) to invest VW settlement funds in implementing the agreement.

SWEEP’s advocacy efforts were central to the development and issuance of Colorado state EV plans and adoption of California’s Advanced Clean Car standards. SWEEP and our Allies also have made considerable progress in convincing public officials in Nevada and New Mexico to adopt the Clean Car standards.

SWEEP has helped unlock approximately $1 billion in funding for utility- and state-funded transportation electrification programs across our region.

SWEEP developed and implemented the Colorado Industrial Energy Challenge program which facilitated adoption of energy savings goals and energy efficiency improvements in numerous manufacturing and other industrial facilities in the state.
The Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) is a public-interest organization promoting greater energy efficiency and clean transportation in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming.