



**Welcome to the May edition of 3CE's Plugged In newsletter!** May is doing double duty — it's both Affordable Housing Month and National Clean Air Month. This month, we're spotlighting how clean energy supports healthier homes, stronger communities, and a more sustainable future. From supporting new, all-electric affordable housing across the Central Coast to raising awareness about indoor air quality and gas stove pollution, we're taking action where people live, work, and breathe. We're also sounding the alarm: Federal tax credits that help make EVs, home batteries, and heat pumps more affordable could be on the chopping block. For now, they're still available — and can be combined with 3CE rebates for even greater savings. Keep reading for stories, resources, and ways to plug into the power of clean energy, this month and every month.

**In this newsletter, you'll find:**

- **3CE Awards More Than \$500K in Rebates to All-Electric Affordable Housing Projects**
- **Time is Running Out: Electrify Your Ride and Home Before Federal Tax Credits End**
- **May is National Clean Air Month: Rethinking the Role of Gas Stoves**
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# 3CE Awards More Than \$500K in Rebates to All-Electric Affordable Housing Projects



Communities throughout the Central Coast face enormous challenges in meeting affordable housing needs. Equipping these new homes with all-electric appliances reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves indoor air quality. Installing all-electric, energy-efficient appliances also saves money on monthly utility bills and prevents the need for costly retrofits later. Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) is helping to ensure that new affordable housing is built all-electric by offering incentives through our [New Construction Electrification Program](#).

So far in our fiscal year 2024-25, the program has distributed \$667,000 in incentives, including \$517,000 dedicated to building new all-electric affordable housing for residents of the Central Coast. (3CE's fiscal year runs October 1 through September 30.) The agency also provided \$105,000 in rebates for Accessory Dwelling Units and helped fund disaster rebuilds of three single-family homes that were destroyed in the 2020 CZU wildfire in Santa Cruz County.

A little more than halfway through fiscal 2024-25, in partnership local housing organizations, 3CE has provided incentives for five all-electric affordable housing projects: Sunset Terrace in Pismo Beach, a senior living complex with 25 units; Natural Bridges Apartments in Santa Cruz with 20 units; the Vine Street Residences, nine single-family homes in Paso Robles; and Cienega Heights and Sparrow Terrace, both in Watsonville with 80 and 72 units, respectively, for a total of 206 new units. Thirty-nine of the units at Cienega Heights and 35 units at Sparrow Terrace are reserved for farmworker households. Two of these projects, Natural Bridges Apartments (developed by the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Cruz) and Cienega Heights (developed by MidPen Housing) celebrated ribbon cuttings this month.

Along the Central Coast, buildings are primarily heated and supported by natural gas, followed by propane. Close to a million metric tons of greenhouse gases are emitted from the Central Coast's built environment each year. 3CE is proud to support housing developers of these affordable all-electric homes that provide greater safety, health, and comfort for our communities and are essential for the transition to a more sustainable, clean-energy future.

## Time is Running Out: Electrify Your Ride and Home Before Federal Tax Credits End



If you've been thinking about purchasing an electric vehicle, it's time to act. The federal tax credit of [up to \\$7,500](#) for eligible electric vehicles is still available, but it may not be for much longer. Acting now could save you thousands.

As a 3CE customer, you can stack the Federal Tax Credit with 3CE's Electrify Your Ride rebate, which offers up to \$4,000 toward the purchase or lease of a new or used electric vehicle. 3CE also offers up to \$4,700 in rebates to help cover the cost of purchasing and installing a home EV charger and associated electrical work.

You may be eligible to receive up to \$16,200 in total EV incentives through combining 3CE's Electrify Your Ride rebates with the Federal Tax Credit. This is in addition to manufacturer incentives including low interest rates to buy, and leases of about \$275/month for a basic EV or \$575/month for a luxury model. According to a recent independent study by New AutoMotive, the average driver saves \$8,000 in fuel, repairs, and total cost over a traditional gas car.

Federal home-electrification incentives for replacing gas-fired water heaters and HVAC systems with modern heat-pump equipment are also at risk. Under the proposed budget currently before Congress, the typical 3CE customer would lose the 30% tax credits for [heat pumps](#) (up to \$2,000 per year) and for [home batteries](#).



For now, however, these incentives can still be paired with 3CE's home-battery rebate of up to \$500 per kilowatt hour of storage capacity and a variety of heat-pump incentives.

The opportunity to combine these incentives may not last forever. If you're considering going electric, now is the time to take advantage of these rebates before the window closes.

Visit our website to learn more about 3CE's [Electrify Your Ride](#), [Electrify Your Home](#) and [Residential Battery Rebate](#) programs. Together with our customers, 3CE will continue using Power For Good.

## May is National Clean Air Month: Rethinking the Role of Gas Stoves



May marks National Clean Air Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of clean air for our health and well-being. The first week of May also recognizes Air Quality Awareness Week, making this the perfect time to focus on an often-overlooked source of air pollution: natural gas stoves.

While we often associate air pollution with vehicle emissions or industrial activity, many harmful pollutants originate much closer to home, right in our kitchens. Natural gas stoves have been shown to emit a variety of hazardous substances, including nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), benzene, and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These pollutants can contribute to poor indoor air quality and lead to serious health consequences, especially for vulnerable groups like children, older adults, and individuals with asthma.

### **Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Respiratory Health**

Gas stoves are a significant source of NO<sub>2</sub> in homes. According to a growing body of research, exposure to NO<sub>2</sub>, even at levels commonly found indoors, can trigger asthma attacks, worsen respiratory symptoms, reduce lung function, and increase the risk of respiratory infections. Children are particularly at risk, as their lungs are still developing and they breathe more rapidly than adults, leading to greater exposure.

## **Benzene: A Hidden Danger**

Benzene is a known carcinogen, and recent research has found alarming levels of this chemical emitted from gas cooktops. A 2023 study revealed that using a gas stove on high heat could elevate indoor benzene levels to those found in secondhand tobacco smoke, posing a serious health hazard to anyone in the home.

## **Other Harmful Pollutants**

In addition to NO<sub>2</sub> and benzene, natural gas used in cooking can contain a range of hazardous pollutants, including toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, and hexane. These compounds can accumulate indoors, particularly in homes with inadequate ventilation, contributing to chronic exposure and increasing the risk of health problems over time.

## **Who's Most at Risk?**

People with preexisting health conditions, such as asthma or allergies, are especially susceptible to the harmful effects of gas stove emissions. Children and older adults are also more vulnerable, making indoor air quality a critical issue for families and multi-generational households.

## **What Can You Do?**

Improving indoor air quality doesn't have to be complicated. Here are a few steps you can take:

- Switch to electric or induction cooktops: These alternatives do not emit harmful pollutants during use and are increasingly energy efficient.
- Improve kitchen ventilation: Use a range hood that vents to the outside, or open windows while cooking to help reduce pollutant levels.
- Support safer appliances: Encourage policymakers and manufacturers to strengthen safety standards for gas appliances.

For more information and a deeper look at the research behind gas stoves and indoor air pollution, visit [PSE Healthy Energy](#). This Clean Air Month, let's take steps toward healthier homes and cleaner air — for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

# **3CE in the Community**

3CE staff are active in the community and we hope to see you at one of these upcoming meetings and events.

**June 7:**      [Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce Quarterly Business Insights Breakfast](#)

Ferrante Room, Monterey Marriott, 350 Calle Principal

**June 8:**      [Green & Blue: A Coastal Celebration](#)

Rancho La Patera & Stow House, 304 N. Los Carneros Road, Goleta

# Automatically Lower Your Bill & Get Rewards



3CE has partnered with OhmConnect, a free service that will alert you when electricity prices spike in your area due to high demand so you can conserve energy, ultimately lowering your electric bill while you earn rewards. It takes just two minutes to join, and you can also get exclusive discounts on smart-home tech and win prizes!

[Sign Me Up!](#)

## Upcoming 3CE Board Meetings

Central Coast Community Energy encourages public participation in agency meetings, held in person and on ZOOM with available dial-in options. Attendees may provide live public comments remotely through Zoom or submit them in advance via email at [publiccomment@3ce.org](mailto:publiccomment@3ce.org). Sign up to receive public board notices that include meeting details.

[Dates and Livestream Info](#)