



60th Annual Business Meeting

Navigating a Hyper-Political Environment as a Building Official

RAJ PATEL

CALBO PAST PRESIDENT ○ PRESIDENT, JAS PACIFIC

RON TAKIGUCHI

CALBO PAST PRESIDENT ○ CITY OF PASADENA

HYPER-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT – NATIONAL & STATE LEVEL

- Elements of a hyper-political environment:
 - Inconsistent political system
 - Conflicting regulations and policies
 - Lack of commitment to enforce in a fair and consistent manner

HYPER-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT – AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- *This is newer*
- City Council members *were* non-partisan
- Issues *were* focused on the local quality of life
- Process to decide community issues *were* often not vote driven but more of a consensus

HYPER-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT – AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

- Public demanding local leaders take positions on larger policy issues
- Demanding local leaders pick sides
- Less civility, more rancor
- Social Media and online tools create issues and division

HYPER-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT – AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Results:

- Trust in government continues to fall
 - ✓ Federal Govt 50% -to- 40%
 - ✓ State Govt 60% -to- 50%
 - ✓ Local Govt 70% -to- 60%

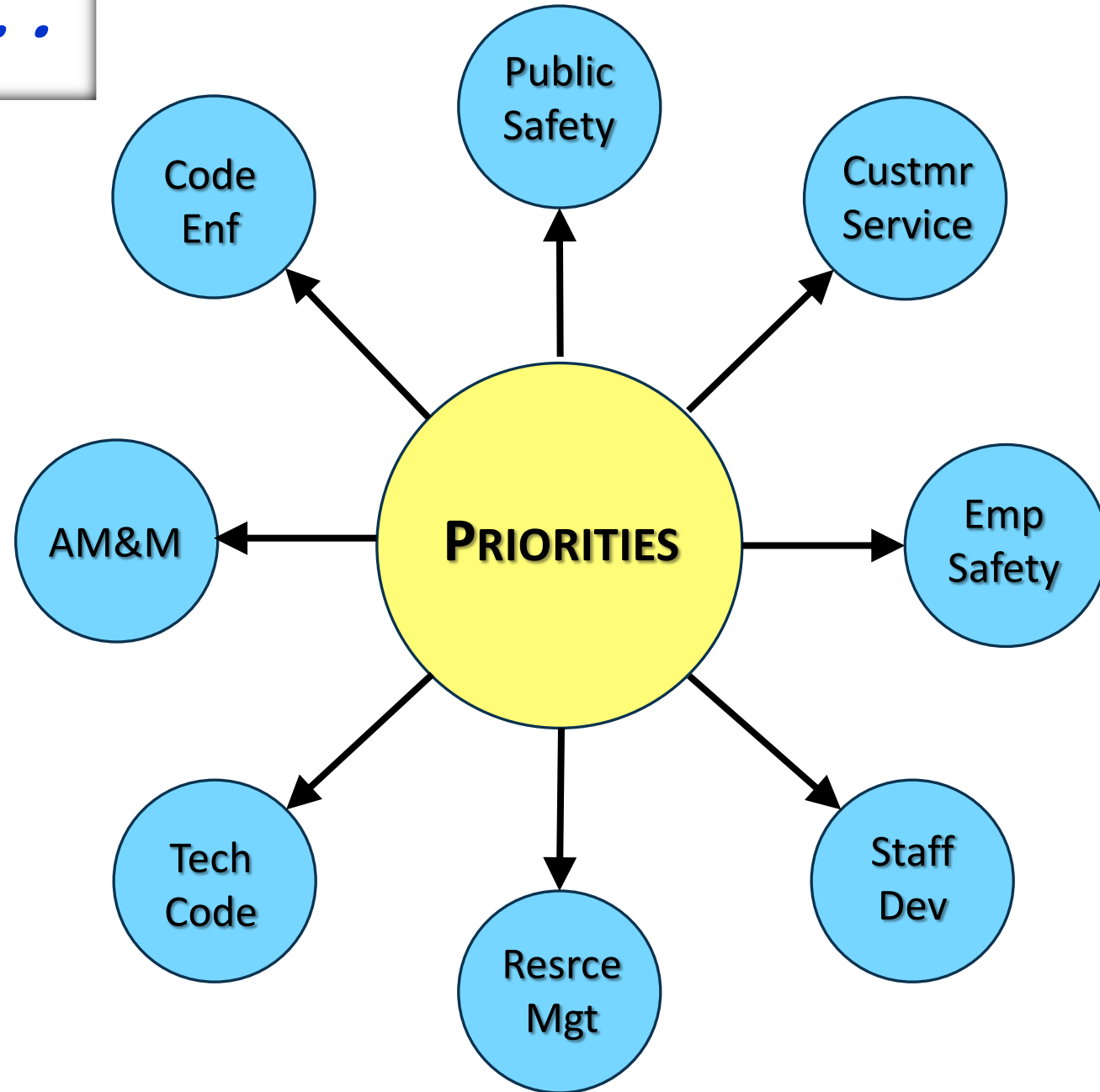
IMPACT TO YOUR ROLE AS A BUILDING OFFICIAL

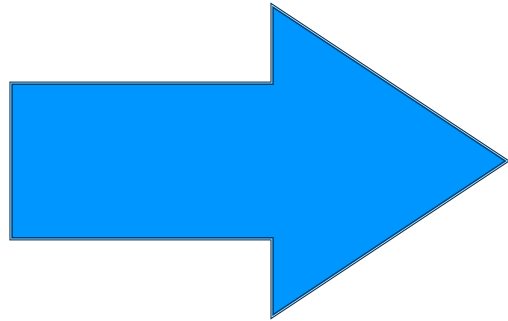
- Local government is now taking an aggressive role in making policy
- These policy decisions tend to rise to the top
- As a result, there is less time to ask staff for their input



- ✓ Policies are reflected in new Priorities
- ✓ What is your strategy on how to stay in front of these new Priorities?

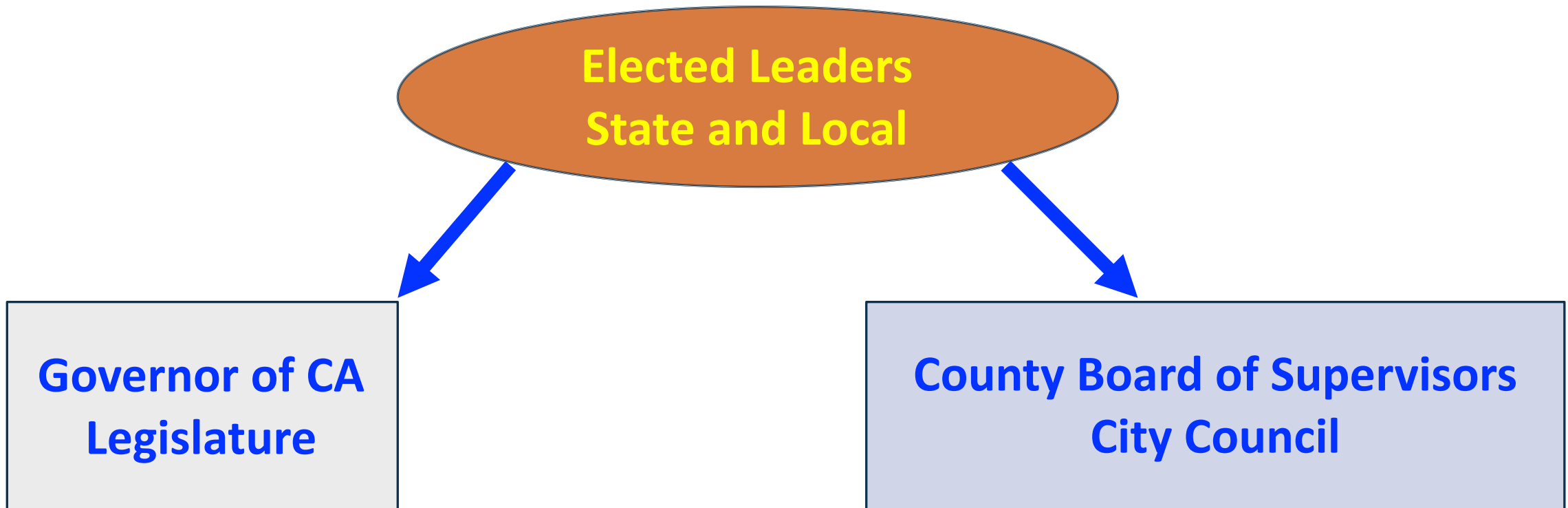
PRIORITIES





POLITICAL PRIORITIES

WHO DETERMINES PRIORITIES?





**State:
Office of the Governor**



**State Budget
and Executive Orders
(Agencies)**



Policies

**Mandates:
Legislature**



Bills



Laws



***STATE BUDGET SUBMITTED BY
GOVERNOR JANUARY 10***
***In May, revisions based on latest
economic forecasts and public advocacy***

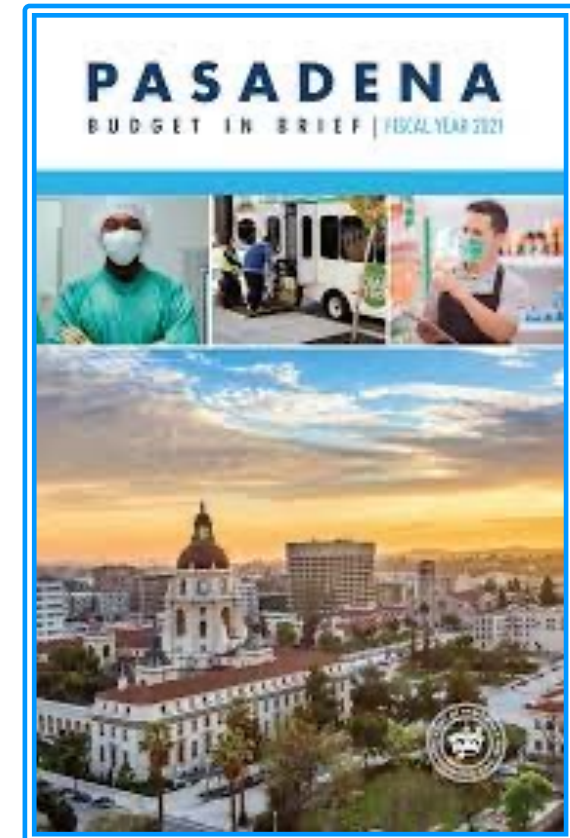


***LEGISLATURE MUST APPROVE BY
JUNE 15***
EFFECTIVE JULY 1



POLITICAL PRIORITIES

Where Can Priorities be Found?



STATE OF CALIFORNIA PRIORITIES



Governor Newsom 2022 Budget
\$268B

Includes new spending priorities
Some priorities may impact you

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: **\$7 BILLION**

- Drought
- Climate Resilience
- Coastal Issues
- Extreme Heat
- Circular Economy
- Wildfire

IMPACTS

- ✓ New Technologies, Building Materials
- ✓ Additional Code Requirements
- ✓ May Require Code Enforcement



HOUSING, COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEV: \$2 BILLION



- Infill Downtown & Brownfields
- Affordable Housing Construction
- Microunit Development
- Mixed Income Rental Housing
- Preservation Downtown Units, Adaptive Reuse

IMPACTS

- ✓ Infill, Brownfield Sites Complex to Develop
- ✓ Existing Buildings: CEBC, State Historical Code, AM&M
- ✓ New Technologies, New Building Materials
- ✓ Expediting? Fee Exemptions? Fee Reductions?

TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION & PW: \$15B

- Public Infrastructure
- Zero Emissions Vehicles



IMPACTS

- ✓ Infrastructure Effects
- ✓ Expedited Permit Requests from Utilities and Telecommunications
- ✓ Permitting for alternate fueling stations

GOVERNOR'S ORDERS

Executive Department

State of California

EXECUTIVE ORDER B-52-18

WHEREAS California's 33 million acres of forestland and 1,256 square miles of urban forest canopy capture and clean our water supply, provide rich biodiversity, support local economies, provide recreational and educational opportunities, and serve as spiritual and cultural centers for indigenous and local communities across the state; and

Supporting Wood Products Innovation

13. The Office of the State Fire Marshal, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Division of the State Architect, the California Building Standards Commission, and the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development shall review the approved Tall Wood Building Proposal of the International Code Council's Ad Hoc Committee on Tall Wood Buildings and shall consider proposing its adoption into the California Building Standards Code in the subsequent intervening code cycle.

LEGISLATIVE BILLS

- ❑ *AB 1329: Building Codes: Earthquakes: Functional Recovery Standard*
- ❑ *AB 2234: Planning and Zoning: Housing: Post Entitlement Phase Permits*
- ❑ *AB 2597: Dwelling Unit Standards*
- ❑ *SB 379: Residential Solar Energy Systems: Permitting*
- ❑ *SB 1194: Public Restrooms: Building Standards*

COUNTY PRIORITIES





California State
Association of Counties

2022 Priorities

1. COVID-19 Response & Recovery
2. Behavioral Health Funding
3. Addressing Wildfire in the Modern Age
4. Modernize the Brown Act and Promote Safe, Welcoming Public Meetings
5. Homelessness Funding Implementation
6. Affordable Housing
7. Broadband
8. Drought Preparedness
9. Illegal Cannabis

Courtesy: George Chavez
City Manager, Beverly Hills, CA

POLITICAL VS PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL ROLES

**City Council
(Political)**

**Departments
(Professional Technical)**

City Council is Responsible for:

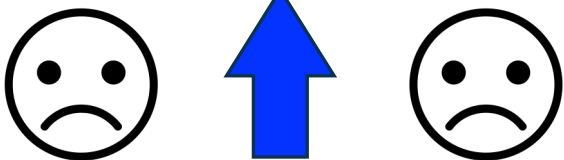
- ✓ *Establishing Priorities*
- ✓ *Establishing Policies*
- ✓ *Authorize Funding (Budget)*
- ✓ *Enacting Local Laws*
- ✓ *Providing Vision & Goals to the City Mgr*

Department Heads and Staff are Responsible for:

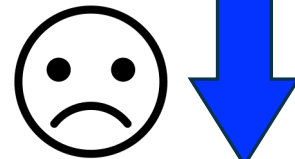
Professional and Technical work related to implementation of Council Policies, Priorities and the Operation of a Department

- ✓ *Timeliness*
- ✓ *Budget*
- ✓ *Quality Assurance*
- ✓ *Customer Satisfaction*

Expectations

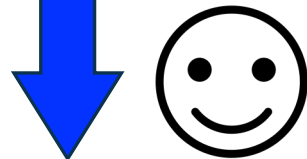


**Negative Outcomes
Often Find Their Way Back Into the
Political World**



Negative Outcomes

Performance



Positive Outcomes

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING PRIORITIES



POLITICAL PRIORITIES – ALWAYS A CRISIS

10 Points to Remember

#1: Don't Downplay Priorities

May not seem important compared to your daily Priorities

But . . . If it is important to them . . . It should be important to you



- ✓ You may not agree
- ✓ May conflict with other rules you administer
- ✓ Impact your resources

YOU are the Implementer!

#2: Don't Surprise People

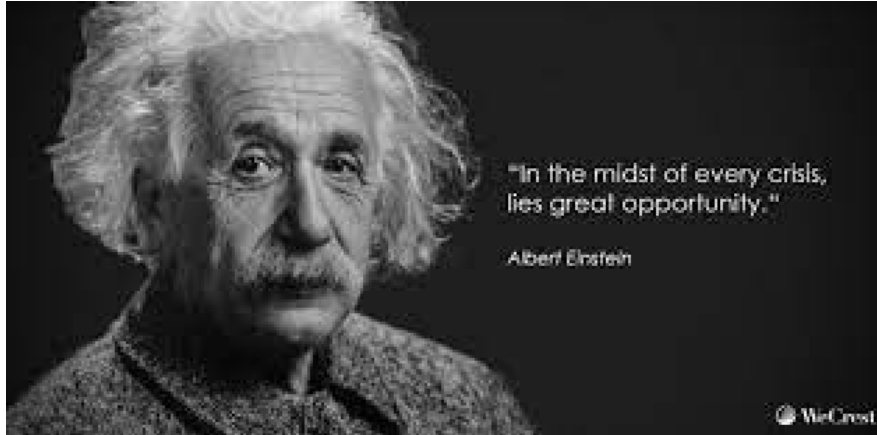


- *Especially Elected People!*
- *Especially Your Boss!*

Do Your Homework

1. At the State level? Regional level? Neighboring Cities?
2. Will this be considered a local amendment to a “Building Standard”?
3. Will this conflict with other code/safety provisions?
4. Is this practically feasible?
5. Who are the proponents of the change?

#3: Turn a Crisis into an Advantage



- *Nothing motivates government agencies as much as a crisis*
- *Crisis creates urgency*
- *Urgency allows dramatic changes in organizational Policies*
- *Process, Resource Allocation, Break Down Silos*

POINT #3: Turn a Crisis into an Advantage

Example – Recent Pandemic

- *On March 20, 2020 Bureaucracy (& Accountability)*
 - *Working from Home; Taking IT Equipment Home*
 - *Purchasing Items w/o Prior Authorization*
- *Customer Service Became Secondary to Public, Employee Safety*
 - *Closed Counter; Virtual Inspections; Work Done On-Line*
- *New Levels of Cooperation Between Internal Divisions*
 - *Assistance from IT, HR, Finance*
- *Emergence of Talent*
 - *Individual Skills Sets and Talent*

#4: Focus on the Lifeboat – Not the Sinking Ship




- *Easy to focus on the problem*
- *Being part of the solution shows leadership*
- *What does success look like?*
- *Define a tangible solution at the beginning*
- *Not a vision, not performing analysis, not defining a strategy*

IDENTIFY ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM:

- ✓ **Work Product:** Ordinance (not a local amendment to building codes)
- ✓ **Scope:** Who should the ordinance apply to? Who is exempt?
- ✓ **Timeline:** Phased implementation?
- ✓ **Organizational:** Enforcement (add/borrow/move staff or programs)
- ✓ **Budget:** Adding resources (temp or permanent)
- ✓ **Fees:** Potential for adding fees/General Fund money
- ✓ **Technology:** Opportunity to ask for IT updates/equipment
- ✓ **Customer:** Don't forget to consider from a customer viewpoint!
Service

#5: Make it Easy for People to Help You

- *A Committee is not needed for everything*
 - *Everyone is busy, but most people are inclined to be helpful*
 - *Break down silos with other managers*
 - *Opportunity to identify and develop new talent*
- 

#6: Let Go of Ideas – Even Good Ones

- *Not all ideas survive*
- *Sometimes you are just ahead of your time*

#7: Don't Let the Perfect be the Enemy of the Good



- *There is never a solution that makes everyone happy*
- *Just start somewhere*

#8: Learn to Unlearn

- *Learning is acquiring knowledge building on what you know*
- *Unlearning is being open to new processes and change*
- *Expand your comfort zone*
- *You don't always have to be the smartest person in the room*

#9: Practice Solidarity



- *“We Are in This Together” attitude*
- *Helps inspire others that are struggling*

#10: Manage the Narrative

- *Rise above the details*
- *Communicate the Big Picture*

EXAMPLE

STATE PRIORITY . . .

Assembly Bill 3232 (Friedman, 2018)

directs the California Energy Commission (CEC) to:

“assess the potential ... to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases in ... residential and commercial building stock by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by January 1, 2030.”

2018 Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Buildings (MMTCO₂e)



Combustion



Refrigerant (HFCs)



Electricity

2018 Snapshot - 98.4 (MMTCO₂e)



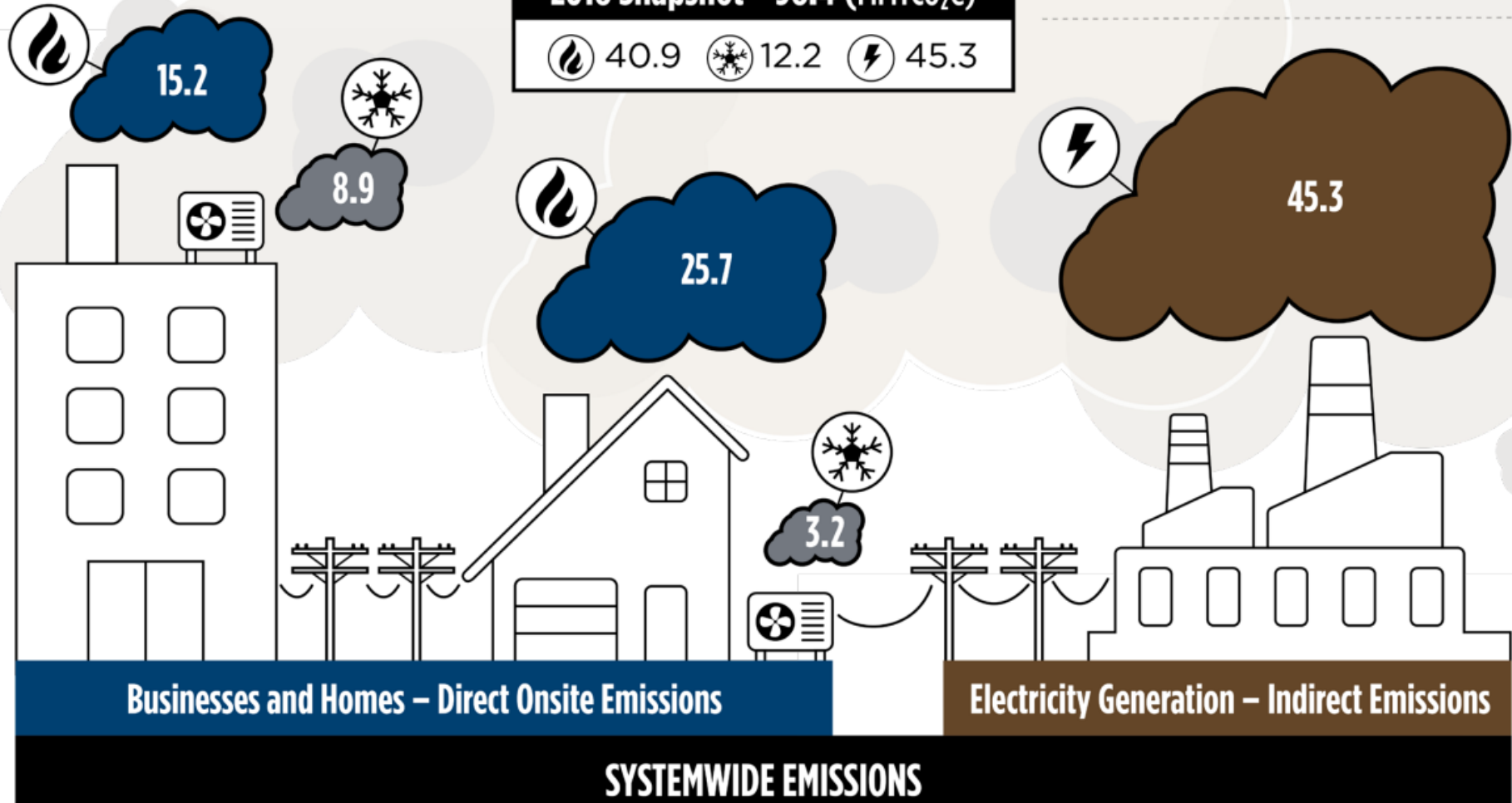
40.9



12.2



45.3



Businesses and Homes – Direct Onsite Emissions

Electricity Generation – Indirect Emissions

SYSTEMWIDE EMISSIONS

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

- *Buildings produce a quarter of the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions*
- *Reducing these emissions is a key part of California's climate strategy*
- *The CEC approved the California Building Decarbonization in August 2021*
- *Provides a framework toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with California's buildings*

SEVEN WAYS TO DECARBONIZE A BUILDING

The assessment recommends seven broad strategies for owners, builders, and utilities to cost-effectively decarbonize buildings.

- 1. Replace gas-fueled appliances with efficient electric alternatives.*
- 2. Continue decarbonizing electricity by growing the low-carbon share of the generation portfolio.*
- 3. Foster energy efficiency through incentive programs, appliance standards, building standards, research, and financing.*

SEVEN WAYS TO DECARBONIZE A BUILDING

4. *Transition to using better refrigerants and reduce associated leakage.*
5. *Grow distributed energy resources such as rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) and onsite battery storage.*
6. *Decarbonize the gas system by displacing natural gas with renewable gas produced from carbon-free electricity or existing waste streams.*
7. *Give building owners and occupants incentives to shift their electricity use in response to the timing of energy costs, GHG emissions intensity, or electricity grid emergencies.*



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DISCUSSION



Navigating a Hyper-Political Environment as a Building Official

? **QUESTIONS** ?

Raj Patel ♦ raj@jaspacific.com

Ron Takiguchi ♦ rtakiguchi@cityofpasadena.net



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THANK YOU

Raj Patel ♦ raj@jaspacific.com

Ron Takiguchi ♦ rtakiguchi@cityofpasadena.net