



ASPEN TECH  
POLICY HUB

PROJECT



DILLON CRUZ

To learn more about  
this project, please visit  
[aspentechpolicyhub.org](https://aspentechpolicyhub.org).

 THE ASPEN INSTITUTE



Photo by American Public Power Association via Unsplash

# Energy Storage for Low-Income Communities

Powering Los Angeles with affordable, clean, and resilient energy

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Los Angeles, like other cities across the United States, is grappling with fighting climate change while keeping energy affordable for its residents. Energy storage can assist on both fronts by allowing communities to use cheap renewable energy even when the sun is down and winds aren't blowing. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power should help Angelenos struggling with their energy bills by (1) implementing a new pilot program that brings local storage to low-income renters and (2) targeting 150 megawatts of local storage within disadvantaged communities. By acting now, the City can harness billions of dollars of public and private investment earmarked toward energy storage while allocating enough time to incorporate this proposal into its 2022 long-term energy roadmap.



**ASPEN TECH  
POLICY HUB**

**PROJECT**

## THE PROBLEM

Los Angeles is expected to spend [up to \\$87 billion](#) in order to completely power its grid with 100% carbon-free energy by 2035. While a major achievement in the face of climate change, this energy transition may increase electricity rates by up to 80%, according to [an analysis by the Los Angeles Ratepayers Advocate](#). However, [nearly one-third of all households in Los Angeles](#) already have trouble paying their monthly utility bills, signifying that these changes will add financial burdens to the lives of many Angelenos.



*Energy storage is just one tool in the broader movement for energy justice.*

## THE SOLUTION

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) uses many tools to maintain energy affordability, including debt assistance and energy efficiency. But one tool remains underutilized: energy storage. Able to dispatch electricity at any time and place, energy storage can reduce monthly bills, increase resilience during power outages, and advance the City's clean energy goals.

This project recommends policies that push the benefits of energy storage toward low-income Angelenos. First, it proposes a pilot program that incentivizes landlords to install solar-and-storage systems with direct financial returns for renters—a difficult demographic to reach in energy policy. Second, the project proposes a long-term target of 150 megawatts of energy storage in disadvantaged communities for significant ratepayer savings. It also provides a field guide with tools for organizers and advocates to push Los Angeles towards this solution.

*For more information about this project, please see: (1) a [policy brief](#) to LADWP that describes this proposal in further detail; (2) an [operational plan](#) to implement the pilot program; (3) a [draft resolution](#) for LADWP; and (4) a [field guide](#) for organizers to advocate for this solution.*

### ABOUT THE HUB

The Aspen Tech Policy Hub is a Bay Area policy incubator, training a new generation of tech policy entrepreneurs. We take tech experts, teach them the policy process, and support them in creating outside-the-box solutions to society's problems.

The Aspen Institute  
2300 N St. NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20037  
202 736 5800

 THE ASPEN INSTITUTE