

Google Wants to Sell Homes, HERS for Manufactured Homes, and Why Home Batteries Are Winning

The clock is still ticking on the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act. After winning overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress, the bill is still sitting on President Trump's desk. Unless he signs or vetoes it, the legislation is expected to become law automatically this Friday, July 10. The package includes dozens of provisions aimed at boosting housing supply, modernizing manufactured housing, expanding financing options, and lowering barriers to new development. We'll be watching to see whether the president acts—or lets the clock run out.

https://rollcall.com/2026/06/29/housing-bill-sent-to-trump-starting-countdown-to-enactment/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

RESNET has launched the first HERS Rating program for modern manufactured homes, bringing the same nationally recognized energy-performance score used for site-built homes to one of America's largest sources of affordable housing. That means buyers, lenders, and utilities can finally compare energy performance apples to apples—and manufacturers may gain access to more incentive programs while giving homeowners lower operating costs.

<https://www.resnet.us/about/resnet-launches-program-for-modern-manufactured-homes/>

Speaking of manufactured housing, Vermont is promoting ultra-efficient manufactured homes that use more than 50% less energy than conventional models. They cost about \$21,000 more upfront, but save homeowners up to \$2,700 a year on utility bills. When you factor in a 30-year mortgage and those lower energy costs, the total cost of ownership is about the same—and likely better over time as energy prices rise. But these houses will be more comfortable and have better IAQ. The state needs roughly 30,000 new homes by 2029, and it's betting that manufactured housing can help close the gap.

<https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/energy-efficiency/vermont-cut-utility-bills-manufactured-homes?>

Google is making a bigger move into real estate—and it could shake up how homes are bought and sold. Through a new partnership with Bright MLS and HouseCanary, home listings now appear directly in Google search results, with buyers contacting the listing

agent instead of going through sites like Zillow. That could reduce the influence of traditional listing portals, give builders and brokerages a more direct path to buyers, and even create new ways to market new-home communities.

https://www.realestatenews.com/2026/06/26/new-integration-to-give-bright-mls-listings-a-boost-on-google?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Think those energy upgrades are paying off? They might be saving you money every month—but they may not always add value to your home. Features like solar panels, better insulation, heat pumps, and high-performance windows can slash utility bills, but they often don't show up in a home's appraisal. That could finally be changing. New appraisal standards rolling out later this year will require appraisers to document energy-efficient features. But there's a catch: homeowners still need to prove what they have. Michele Lerner's latest blog explains why documentation matters, how to make sure upgrades get recognized, and the simple steps that could add thousands to a home's appraised value when it's time to sell.

<https://www.greenbuildermedia.com/blog/getting-a-real-roi-on-energy-efficient-features>

California is trying to make heat pumps a lot easier to install. A bipartisan bill called the Heat Pump Access Act, or SB 222, is advancing through the state legislature after clearing another committee this week. The bill would create a single statewide permitting process, cap permit fees, reduce inspection delays, allow remote inspections for qualifying projects, and limit HOA restrictions. Why does it matter? Experts estimate that 75 to 90 percent of heat pump installations in California happen without permits because the current system is so inconsistent and complicated. Supporters say making the permitting process faster and simpler could be just as important as improving the technology itself—especially as California works toward a goal of installing six million heat pumps by 2030.

https://calmatters.digitaldemocracy.org/bills/ca_202520260sb222#utm_source=chatgpt.com

Here's a surprise: Home batteries are booming—even as residential solar slows down. Americans installed a record 673 megawatts of home battery storage in the first quarter of 2026, with California, Hawaii, Texas, and Arizona leading the way. Why? State incentives, rising electricity prices, and new opportunities for homeowners to earn money by supporting the grid. In fact, many installers say batteries have become the bigger selling point, with some customers adding storage even when they aren't installing new solar panels. It may be the next big shift in residential energy. We'll link the Bloomberg story in the show notes.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-07-01/us-home-battery-installations-boosted-by-state-incentives?>

If you're trying to sell homes the way you sold them 10 years ago, Gen Z has news for you. A new McKinsey consumer report finds Gen Z is rewriting the rules of buying. They discover products through social media, use AI to shop (even though they increasingly don't trust AI), rely on wearables to manage their health, value experiences over possessions, and increasingly buy secondhand instead of new. For builders and manufacturers, the takeaway is clear: tomorrow's homebuyers won't just ask about square footage. They'll want to know how a home supports their health, lifestyle, technology, and long-term value.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/state-of-consumer?>

Our editors' product of the week is Novano Building Products' new line of beautiful wood-free engineered cladding and exterior materials made with rice husks and advanced polymers. The company's composite technology transforms agricultural byproducts into durable, low-maintenance building materials designed to reduce environmental impact without sacrificing performance, and resist moisture, UV degradation, and wear.

<https://novanobuildingproducts.com/en-us/about-novano-usa/>

This week's COGNITION Hot Take has a simple premise: A House That Doesn't Perform Offers Zero Value. In one chart, you can see how consumers rank characteristics of a house. The top three desired characteristics are lowest long term cost, highest comfort and wellbeing, and improved quality of life. These beat out best investment potential, lowest upfront cost, and enhanced aesthetics and design.

<https://www.greenbuildermedia.com/blog/a-house-that-doesnt-perform-offers-zero-value>

We're excited to share that Green Builder Media's COGNITION Smart Data research was recently featured in *Forbes*. The article highlights the five wellness bathroom features homeowners are actually spending money on: heated floors, natural light enhancements, advanced lighting, smart controls, and comfort-height toilets. The interesting part? Several of those weren't high on homeowners' wish lists when they started planning their renovations—but they became must-haves once they learned more about them.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiegold/2026/07/07/5-wellness-bathroom-features-that-homeowners-are-actually-paying-for/>

Don't forget to register for next week's free webinar, Understanding the Ventilation Puzzle. Join building science expert Daran Wastchak of Learning Edge for a practical deep dive into residential ventilation systems, indoor air quality, filtration, code requirements, and performance verification.

<https://www.greenbuildermedia.com/webinar-understanding-the-ventilation-puzzle>

You can click the links in the notes to register for this event, see a list of important sustainable building events, and to learn more about the stories in today's pod. Forward this pod to a colleague or friend—we're growing The Green Builder Media Network with our help! See you next week.