



Building a Business Case: Energy and Sustainability Software in City and County Governments

ENERGYCAP

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Introduction: Building your case for success

City and county governments face mounting challenges in managing energy use, utility costs, and sustainability goals. From decentralized utility billing across departments to meeting aggressive climate action plans, the public sector must juggle operational efficiency, cost savings, and environmental responsibility—all while being transparent with taxpayers.

Managing these complex demands requires robust data management tools. Spreadsheets and manual processes simply don't scale. Energy management software like EnergyCAP helps governments centralize utility data, uncover cost-saving opportunities, and track progress toward emissions goals. By streamlining processes and ensuring accurate data, municipalities can better serve their communities while achieving operational excellence.

This guide is here to help you build a solid case for investing in energy and sustainability software. We'll walk through the unique challenges governments face, outline measurable benefits, and demonstrate how EnergyCAP supports your goals with proven results.

Identifying the need: Why good data is critical

Reliable energy and utility data is the foundation of effective energy management, yet many city and county governments face these common challenges:



Decentralized billing systems: Utility data is scattered across departments, making it difficult to manage, analyze, and report accurately.



Manual processes: Wrangling spreadsheets or re-entering numbers from utility bills—entering utility data by hand wastes time, introduces errors, and diverts staff from strategic work.



Reactive maintenance: Without proactive insights, cities are left responding to costly issues like water leaks or energy spikes after they occur.



Regulatory demands: From state-level mandates to federal grant requirements, tracking and reporting emissions is often cumbersome and inconsistent.



Stakeholder accountability: Taxpayers and elected officials demand transparency and results in sustainability efforts.

Why 'doing nothing' costs more

The cost of ignoring these data challenges is high ([We have a calculator to prove it!](#) But more on that later...) Missed savings from billing errors, inefficient operations, and wasted energy add up quickly. Compliance risks multiply when reporting systems fail to meet mandates. Investing in robust energy software ensures your data works for you—not against you—by transforming it into the foundation for smarter decisions and measurable success.

Benefits of energy and sustainability software

Investing in energy software delivers measurable improvements across operations, finances, and sustainability goals.



Cost savings

Most EnergyCAP customers report 10% or more in annual utility costs.

- ▶ Improved energy efficiency.
- ▶ Reduced utility billing errors and late fees.
- ▶ Optimized procurement and demand management.



Time savings

EnergyCAP customers save on average 37 hours of employee time per month.

- ▶ Simplified reporting for multiple stakeholders.
- ▶ Automated compliance (e.g., ENERGY STAR, LEED, etc.).
- ▶ Quickly identify efficiency opportunities.



Risk management

On average, ~5% of utility bills are flagged every month with actionable issues or errors.

- ▶ Catching billing errors before paying.
- ▶ Avoiding late fees
- ▶ Avoiding non-compliance penalties.

Sustainability leadership

- ▶ Meet climate action goals with accurate GHG tracking.
- ▶ Increase community engagement with transparent reporting.



Building the financial case

To secure buy-in for energy and sustainability software, it is important to present a strong financial case. Here are some tips for demonstrating measurable ROI and proving how this investment delivers both immediate and long-term value.

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ROI analysis

- ▶ **Demonstrate potential savings:** Energy software can generate savings in multiple areas, including reduced energy consumption, streamlined labor, and avoidance of non-compliance penalties. For instance, EnergyCAP clients typically save 10% on utility bills annually, with some recovering over \$130 million in cost avoidance, as seen at the University of New Mexico.
- ▶ **Highlight fast payback periods:** Many higher education institutions see ROI within 2–3 years, driven by reduced waste, better procurement, and error detection. This fast return makes energy software a low-risk, high-value investment.

Budget justification

- ▶ Compare software costs to current inefficiencies like missed billing errors or time-consuming manual reporting.
- ▶ Link the investment to operational budgets and capital improvement projects.

Grants and incentives

- ▶ Leverage federal and state funding for energy efficiency projects. Programs like the Department of Energy’s Local Government Clean Energy Program can offset upfront costs.

Addressing stakeholder concerns with proof

To build a strong business case for energy and sustainability software, it's essential to address the priorities of different campus stakeholders. Each group has unique concerns, and showing how the software aligns with their goals can drive consensus and support.



EnergyCAP has allowed us to understand our energy use like never before and uncover significant savings opportunities.”

Energy Manager // James City County

Facilities/operations teams

Facilities teams prioritize ease of implementation and seamless integration with existing systems. EnergyCAP is designed to work with tools like building automation systems (BAS) and utility accounting platforms, ensuring minimal disruption during rollout.

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Proof: James City County used EnergyCAP to manage utility data for 221 facilities, streamlining utility management and saving over \$50K annually. The centralized system simplified data processing and eliminated inefficiencies.



I import the invoices into EnergyCAP with the script they created for us, and with a few keystrokes, I can enter up to 20 invoices in just 5 minutes.”

City Energy Manager // City of Minneapolis

Finance teams

Finance leaders focus on balancing upfront costs with long-term savings. EnergyCAP offers measurable ROI, with institutions typically seeing payback within 2–3 years due to reduced energy waste, streamlined processes, and avoided penalties.

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Proof: EnergyCAP clients save an average of 10% on utility bills annually—some achieving significant cost avoidance.



EnergyCAP has everything that we need...”

Energy Management Analyst // Miami-Dade County, FL

Sustainability offices

Sustainability teams require tools to meet carbon neutrality goals and simplify complex reporting. EnergyCAP automates Scope 1, 2, and 3 greenhouse gas tracking, facilitating compliance with climate mandates.

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Proof: Oklahoma State University has used EnergyCAP since 2007 to reduce energy costs by 18.6%, which has resulted in a reduction of 155,000 metric tons of CO2e in the atmosphere.



EnergyCAP

UtilityManagement minimizes the friction between users and the data. As soon as access to data stops being convenient, people stop asking questions."

**Energy Initiatives Section
Leader // County of
Lexington, KY**

IT departments

IT teams value security and scalability. EnergyCAP's cloud-based infrastructure ensures robust data protection while scaling easily as institutional needs grow.

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Proof: EnergyCAP employs advanced security measures, including end-to-end encryption and regular independent audits, ensuring data protection and system resilience. EnergyCAP obtains SOC 2 Type II certification and FedRAMP Low-Impact SaaS authorization. (source)

Common objections and how to counter them

In the landscape of higher education, challenges can often seem insurmountable. Here we list some common concerns you may encounter when introducing an energy and sustainability software, and effective responses to address them.



“It’s too expensive.”

ROI is key to addressing cost concerns. EnergyCAP typically delivers payback within 2–3 years, with clients saving an average of 10% on utility bills annually. By automating processes and reducing waste, the software pays for itself quickly.

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Proof: James City County saved \$50K annually after implementing EnergyCAP, significantly reducing their energy costs and improving budget efficiency.

The City of Philadelphia streamlined their utility management using EnergyCAP, allowing them to track usage across hundreds of meters and uncover opportunities for cost savings



“We don’t have the resources to implement this.”

EnergyCAP offers robust implementation support, including project management and training, to ensure a smooth transition with minimal disruption. Additionally, cloud-based deployment eliminates the need for on-premises IT resources.

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Proof: EnergyCAP’s implementation services have supported over 850 organizations—including city and county governments—by managing onboarding, training, and ongoing technical support.

The City of San Bernadino, CA leveraged EnergyCAP’s managed services to transition seamlessly, integrating data from 3000+ monthly bills with only a few hours of support training.



“We’re already doing fine with spreadsheets.”

Spreadsheets may work for small-scale tasks, but they’re prone to errors, lack scalability, and consume staff time. EnergyCAP automates processes, ensures accuracy, and provides insights spreadsheets can’t deliver.

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Proof: James City County transitioned from manual utility management to EnergyCAP, centralizing data from 221 locations and significantly reducing staff hours spent on bill entry

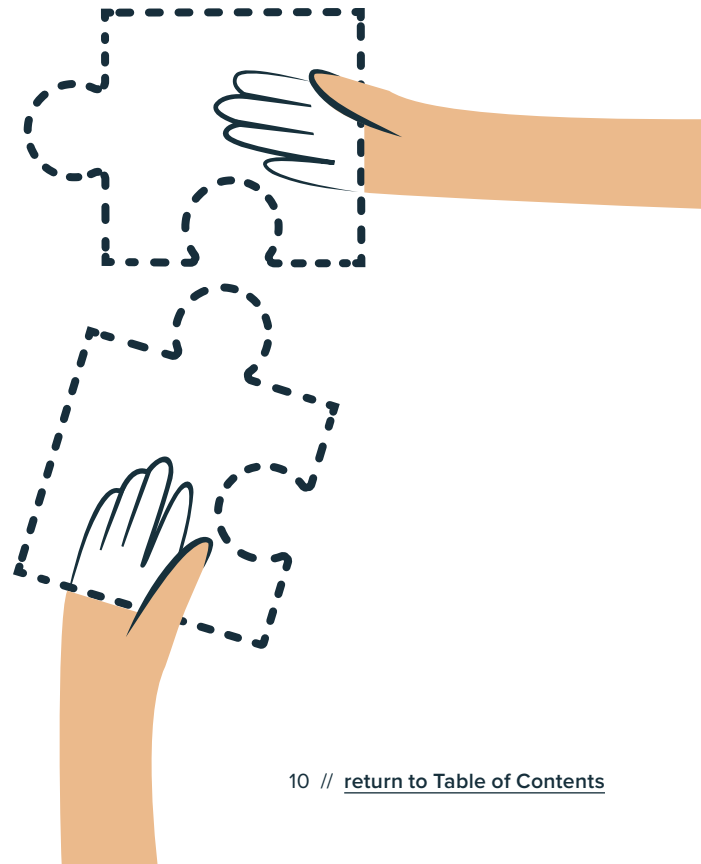
Tips for gaining consensus

- ▶ **Build a coalition of champions.**

Identify stakeholders across departments—facilities, finance, IT, and sustainability—and involve them early in the decision-making process. Highlight how the software addresses each group’s unique priorities.

- ▶ **Present a clear, unified vision.**

Highlight the time currently spent on manual processes and demonstrate the projected cost and time savings achievable with energy software. Show how your team plans to reinvest those savings—both financial and operational—into energy reduction projects, creating a cycle of continuous improvement and additional cost reductions.



Crafting a winning proposal

Writing a winning proposal requires a strategic blend of clarity, persuasiveness, and convincing insights. At its core, a successful proposal demonstrates a deep understanding of challenges, offers a compelling solution, and provides a clear path forward. A well-structured proposal not only makes a case for action but also instills confidence in its feasibility and impact. Keep it focused, data-driven, and reader-friendly to stand out.

We've compiled a detailed proposal PowerPoint template to help you walk stakeholders through the key challenges, proven solutions, and tangible benefits of procuring EnergyCAP.



[Download the proposal template](#)

ENERGYCAP

Proposal to secure funding for EnergyCAP software

Executive summary

Objective: Secure funding for EnergyCAP software to enhance energy management and achieve sustainability goals.

Key benefits: (Highlight 3-5 major benefits such as)

- Save 10% on utility costs annually
- Automate reporting and compliance processes
- Improve decision-making with accurate, centralized data

Call to action: State the desired outcome (e.g., approval for implementation)

Proposed solution

ENERGYCAP

Benefits: EnergyCAP is a comprehensive energy and sustainability management software designed to streamline utility data management, reduce costs, and support sustainability goals. Trusted by hundreds of institutions for over 40 years, it delivers ROI within 2-3 years and empowers users to optimize energy performance, save time, and achieve measurable financial and environmental benefits.

Core EnergyCAP features

- Centralized utility bill management
- Automated GHG emissions reporting (Scope 1, 2, and 3)
- Customizable dashboards for actionable insights

Benefits

- Reduce energy waste and streamline operations
- Eliminate billing errors and simplify compliance processes
- Prioritize and track efficiency projects for maximum ROI (save 10% on utility costs annually)

Current challenges and opportunities

Current challenges	How EnergyCAP can help
Inefficient utility data management	• EnergyCAP centralizes utility bill management
Manual processes prone to errors	• Automates the entry and validation of data input
	• Time savings for staff (20+ hrs per employee)
Difficulty meeting sustainability reporting requirements	• Automation of Scope 1, 2, and 3 reporting, facilitating compliance with clients
	• Improved stakeholder engagement
Rising energy costs and missed savings opportunities	• Audits bills to help identify hidden savings opportunities
	• 10%+ savings on utility costs annually

Cost benefit analysis

Upfront costs:

- **Fixed:** Detailed implementation/training costs

Projected savings: (Excludes potential savings from)

- 10%+ utility cost reduction annually
- Avoid penalties and billing errors (~5% flagged monthly)
- Save 37+ hours/month in employee time

ROI timeline:

- Typical payback in 2-3 years

Top 10 reasons to buy EnergyCAP

1 Savings, savings, savings

Reduce utility bills, save time, and instead invest in the energy projects that will change the way you do business. Most customers save at least 10% year-over-year on utility bill costs after implementing EnergyCAP, and free up more than 20 hours a month of employee time—with Bill CAPture Services customers saving almost double that amount.

2 Simplified processes

Repeatable tenant billing and cost allocation. Instant bill audits. Simplified budgeting, forecasting, and accruals. Automated bill processing. Real-time alerts. Hands-off ENERGY STAR® Portfolio Manager® submittal, just to name a few. EnergyCAP's platform takes every single department's biggest pain points and turns them into wins, freeing up time and resources to focus on strategic initiatives and organizational goals.

3 A single source of truth

Get a 360° view of all your energy data, from utility bills and real-time performance to carbon emissions, all within a single, integrated platform. Energy, sustainability, and accounting teams work together with seamless data sharing, eliminating manual entry, silos, and spreadsheets.

4 Unparalleled insights

Combine granular building-level insights with portfolio-wide analysis and live-streaming data to identify hidden savings opportunities and optimize energy performance across your entire organization. Empower all stakeholders, from energy managers and finance leaders to sustainability teams, with the data they need, when they need it.

5 Maximize ROI

Leverage comprehensive data and powerful analytics to justify energy efficiency investments, track project performance, and accurately demonstrate the financial impact of your sustainability initiatives.



6 **Enhanced reporting**

Effortlessly generate audit-ready reports for mandatory disclosure programs and voluntary sustainability initiatives, saving time and resources. Customize and share powerful dashboards to communicate energy performance to stakeholders and support decision-making.

7 **Data accuracy**

Eliminate data silos and manual entry errors by integrating utility bill data, real-time metering, and carbon emissions factors within a unified system. Best-in-class utility bill auditing ensures use, cost, and demand data is accurate and reliable. Statements from varying utilities, billed in different currencies, and even written in different languages are parsed into consistent, accurate, reliable data that is instantly analyzed.

8 **Proactive energy management**

Utilize real-time alerts and machine learning to identify pressing issues, optimize building performance, and prevent energy waste before it occurs.

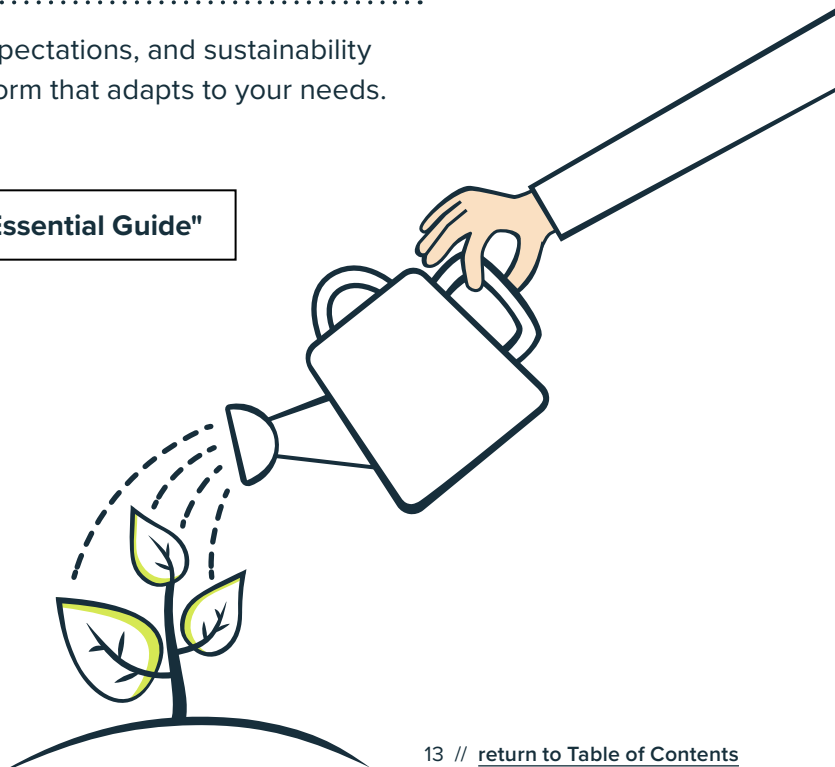
9 **Simplified carbon accounting**

Automate Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions calculations, track progress towards reduction targets, and confidently communicate your environmental performance. Monitor greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, and other key sustainability indicators.

10 **Future-proof your organization**

Stay ahead of evolving regulations, investor expectations, and sustainability goals with a comprehensive and scalable platform that adapts to your needs. EnergyCAP grows with you.

 [Read more about EnergyCAP in our "Essential Guide"](#)



Conclusion

Energy software isn't just an investment—it's a solution to rising utility costs, regulatory complexity, and sustainability challenges. By presenting a data-driven business case, you can secure the tools your city or county needs to lead the way in energy and sustainability management.

Ready to take the next step? Schedule a demo of EnergyCAP to see firsthand how it can transform your campus's energy management.



Where to learn more

EnergyCAP is more than just software; it's a partnership. Our team of experts is committed to helping you achieve your energy management, utility billing, and sustainability goals. We offer comprehensive training, support, and consulting services to ensure your success. Save time, maximize savings, minimize emissions, and accelerate impact.

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- ▶ See inside all of EnergyCAP's solutions on our [self-guided tour](#).
- ▶ See the impact EnergyCAP has had on others in your industry in our [case studies](#).
- ▶ Learn more about each of our solutions
 - ▶ [EnergyCAP UtilityManagement](#)
 - ▶ [EnergyCAP CarbonHub](#)
 - ▶ [EnergyCAP SmartAnalytics](#)
 - ▶ [EnergyCAP Utility Company Platform](#)
 - ▶ [EnergyCAP Bill CAPture services](#)
- ▶ Read about the [ROI of EnergyCAP UtilityManagement](#)—the source of all the statistics in this document, with savings and ROI information directly from the mouths of our users.
- ▶ See how we stack up to the competition by [viewing our many reviews](#)—the source of many of the customer quotes in this document.
- ▶ Use our [ROI calculator](#) to quantify the savings you'll see after EnergyCAP implementation.
- ▶ Ask your Account Executive to demo any of the features or use cases you'd like to learn more about, or [contact us anytime!](#)