

SESSION 6E

PAVING THE WAY FOR A RICH MIX OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR PROGRAMS

Moderator: Patrice Ignelzi, EnerNOC Utility Solutions

PANELISTS:

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Peter Franzese, California Public Utilities Commission
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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Across the country, energy policy makers and program planners are wrestling with whether and which “behavior programs” should be embraced. Policy makers, program planners, and energy efficiency practitioners from service providers to evaluators are engaged in discussions about programs and services that can reduce consumer energy use by influencing energy-related behavior including and beyond equipment purchase decisions.

In California, for instance, regulators have directed utilities to offer behavior programs that utilize “comparative energy usage and disclosure” to residential ratepayers. The panelists’ work on a recent white paper suggests that providing consumers with comparative energy use information represents just one of many possible and effective behavior change strategies.

Using the white paper results, the panelists will frame a discussion about energy-related behaviors, the complex factors that influence them, and a set of promising interventions that can effect change in energy use behaviors. The panelists will involve the audience in exploring new ways to include behavior change in demand side management programmatic efforts and discuss the role that evaluators can play in these efforts.

The regulatory commission and utilities in California engaged a team of experts to develop a white paper to address two key objectives:

- To demonstrate that social and behavioral science offers a rich set of theories and solid empirical research about behavior and behavior change that support using a wide range of intervention strategies in residential DSM programs.
- To identify a set of specific, promising behavior intervention strategies grounded in this social science theory and research that utility DSM program portfolios can utilize to influence energy-related behaviors.

This session will use the results of the white paper to present new ways to think about behavior related to energy use. We will conduct an interactive session that will:

- Highlight the lack of common understanding around terms like “behavior” and “behavior program.” Should we even use the term “behavior program?”
- Show how a variety of social science disciplines inform approaches to energy-related behavior change, including neoclassical and behavioral economics, cognitive and social

psychology, cultural anthropology, and relational and environmental sociology. What does it mean to have so many theories to choose from?

- Present a varied set of behavior interventions drawn from this body of social science theory and research. Is there basis for rallying around a few strategies or worth the effort to introduce additional ones?
- Support new ways of designing residential programs by combining targeted behaviors and intervention strategies. Got more examples?
- Define the role that evaluators can play in helping policy makers and program designers create effective behavior change that saves energy or adjusts energy demand.

All of the panelists, including the moderator, participated in the development of the white paper and other ongoing efforts, from which the issues and discussion points will be drawn. They have broad experience, individually as evaluators, regulators and academics, and collectively on issues surrounding the development and execution of viable demand-side management programs. The audience will be able to actively interact with the team on this timely topic and contribute to its evolution.