

SESSION 6D

EVALUATION WHEN EVERYONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

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SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Not one more minute can be wasted if we are to maximize uptake of energy efficiency to mitigate as much as possible the impending changes from Global Climate Change. Evaluation can play a key role by providing timely information that will enable optimal use of public funds to accelerate adoption of energy efficiency by leveraging market allies' activities to rapidly reach a mature energy efficiency market.

Current evaluation practice is far from its ideal role. Millions of dollars are focused on measuring net-to-gross and waiting until there are enough data to estimate savings with accuracy and precision. Program administrators get information too late to make decisions about program investments, while regulatory rules limit the flexibility of program administrators and program implementers to make changes when they are needed. What is wrong with this picture? How do we change the evaluation paradigm to ensure that programs are operating as effectively and cost efficiently as possible? How do we ensure that program administrators are able to make reliable and valid claims on energy savings? How can the public be assured that their money is being well spent and on the right things?

Evaluation purports to address all of these questions and yet today, evaluation is primarily a summative activity, with little formative work conducted to address these questions. Amidst this the market is beginning to change rapidly as the successes of yesterday's programs bear fruit within the context of worldwide concern about environmental problems such as Global Climate Change. Program implementers and program administrators need a different model if they are to be able to stay ahead of the market change. Evaluators also will need a different model if they are to be able to capture program effects as the market shifts rush ahead of the evaluation schedule.

This panel of two evaluators and a regulator who will respond to the question: What should evaluation look like in a world where everyone cares about energy efficiency and global climate change?