

Panel Title: Attribution of Energy Savings in a Multi-Intervener Context

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Panelists:

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Panel Description:

Energy efficiency is touted as a key option to reduce future emissions of greenhouse gases and ameliorate the impacts of climate change. Reducing climate change effects may require up to an 80% decrease in greenhouse-gas emissions by the year 2050. This will require a sharp reduction in the use of non-sustainable, mostly fossil-fuel-based energy resource supply our modern civilization is based on and development of renewable energy supply system.

In order to optimize our efforts to maximize widespread uptake of energy efficiency and conservation and provide time for the development of alternate, more sustainable and renewable energy supply sources, we need to have data that informs both policy and interveners on what actions are resulting in the best results.

Accurate attribution of energy savings to specific actions is crucial yet increasingly harder to achieve. This difficulty stems from the rapidly increasing variety and number of actors and activities being carried out in both the public and private spheres that result in increased adoption of energy saving products, practices and behaviors. Teasing out the savings attributable to a specific action in today's context is at best a daunting endeavor if not impossible. Accurate attribution is also important to optimize synergistic offerings by public and private efforts in a constantly evolving context. There is widespread agreement in the evaluation, intervener, and policymaker arenas that using the Net-to-Gross ratio to correct for an increasingly nebulous baseline is a methodology that requires revision or even replacement.

The energy efficiency evaluation community is moving from discussing the issue to trying to come up with new approaches to estimate attribution. A recent meeting of the California Measurement Advisory Council (see Calmac.org July 18th, 2007 meeting notes) spent an entire day on this subject. Key proposals included using ranges rather than point estimates for savings and developing databases to support ongoing monitoring of energy efficiency and conservation markets' evolution toward maturity.

This panel will bring together a mix of esteemed evaluators, energy efficiency portfolio managers, and policymakers to seek consensus on what methods and/or approaches can be used to meet both policymakers and portfolio managers' attribution needs. Reaching such a consensus will help the entire community move beyond the current consternation around using an ever less accurate Net-to-Gross ratio to correct gross savings estimates and developing more robust evaluation methods and indicators to guide future energy efficiency and conservation efforts.

Topic Area: Market Research and Evaluation or Policy