



Friday, August 17, 2018

ACEEE Summer Study at Asilomar, California

Utility of the future: What role for energy efficiency?

“Utility of the future!” “Death spirals!” While there’s no shortage of hyperbolic headlines and report titles to describe the utility sector, there’s no denying that the power sector—and energy efficiency’s role in it—are transforming before our very eyes.

This year’s Summer Study is jam-packed with sessions on the future of energy efficiency in an evolving utility sector. As the new manager of ACEEE’s Utilities Program, I see two areas that stand out in the conference agenda and our team’s work: energy efficiency valuation and beneficial electrification.

Multiple panels are exploring a reimagining of efficiency’s policy goals. With declining costs for distributed energy resources and renewables and increasing needs for flexibility, resilience, and affordability, how can we best design energy efficiency policies to meet their new needs and serve its still-critical role as a broad-based utility system resource?

One key piece of the answer is valuation. By better understanding the time- and locational-value of energy efficiency measures and programs, utilities can design programs and rates to serve multiple objectives. Wednesday morning sessions addressed efficiency’s role in integrating variable renewables. Keep an eye on emerging efforts, starting with those in the Pacific Northwest, to update efficiency load curves and to provide states and utilities with the data they will need to incorporate efficiency into distribution and resource planning.

Policy and program metrics and goals are another part of the answer. Some sessions are looking at next-generation goals as well as new planning regimes and modified program designs that maximize the value we get from the “layer cake” of energy efficiency savings. One of the key questions is how



Rachel Gold,
ACEEE’s Utilities
Program Manager

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Working Towards Equity

In Thursday’s informal session Energy Efficiency and Equity: A Reflection on the Week and Next Steps, co-facilitators Jennifer Somers and Colette Pichon Battle guided a discussion reviewing the newly added equity track and its implications for both the conference and the energy efficiency industry going forward.

The panels in the track proved popular and many were standing room only, indicating tremendous interest in equity and justice topics among this year’s attendees. During Thursday’s discussion, attendees were invited to introduce themselves and offer responses to their week’s experience.

The far-ranging conversation explored energy efficiency within a larger context, considering power structures, progress metrics, stakeholders, and even the terminology we use and its implicit premises.

“Everyone needs to show results ... but what constitutes success warrants further evaluation.” said Jennifer Somers, with characteristic understatement. Referring to existing cost effectiveness requirements, one attendee pointed out “we

made this stuff up, and we can change it.” Another added, “Cost effectiveness was not divinely inspired.” Yet another, “...part of the shift we need to make is to break the current funding mechanisms, and stop looking at cost effectiveness and start looking at how to make things better, and fund that.”

Another theme was how programs regard customers who are currently marginalized.

One program manager stated “I’d like to get rid of the term ‘hard to reach.’ If I have trouble reaching you, it doesn’t mean you’re hard to reach, it means that I haven’t figured out how to reach you effectively yet. We know where to find all of our customers.”

Colette Pichon Battle asked people to approach these difficult but important conversations with a willingness to give of themselves, to listen, to be vulnerable, and to resist the temptation to come with solutions. Following hurricane Katrina, Battle found herself asking “Where are the engineers? Why aren’t the data people on our side?” Reflecting on the momentum she observed this week, Battle wondered, “Did we just reach the engineers!?”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ROOM UPDATES.

Panel 8: Capturing Savings through Behavior: Science and Practice has moved to the **Dolphin** meeting room for Friday's session.

Panel 13: Energy Efficiency and Equity: Addressing the Underserved has moved to **Heather** meeting room for Thursday and Friday sessions.

Friday 10:30 am session, Panel 5 room should be **Toyon** (not Triton)

Reminder: check-out of your Asilomar room is 11:00 am. If you are presenting or attending an earlier presentation, you may leave your bags on the deck of **Surf & Sand**.

Check out the Job Board in Surf & Sand

We are seeking a senior economist to lead our jobs and economic analyses. The ideal candidate has a Ph.D. or ABD with interest in policy.

We are also looking for a communications manager with strategic savvy and excellent writing/editing skills. Check out these and other ACEEE career opportunities in **Surf & Sand** or at aceee.org/about/jobs

Come Surf the Ride Board!

Are you looking for a ride after the Summer Study?
Can you offer someone else a ride?
Some of The Latham Scholars, for example, could use a lift to the SF Bay Area,
and you'd love the company!

Please visit the Ride Board in **Surf and Sand**



Upholding his ancestors' tradition, Amir Roth of US DOE presents in a kilt.

Summer Study Evaluation Form

Before you leave, remember to complete an evaluation form for a chance to win an iPad Mini! The form is available in the ACEEE Office in Surf & Sand, online through Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com/SummerStudy2018), or via link in the mobile app.

Return the hard copy form to the office in Surf & Sand.

Your thoughts and suggestions are extremely important to us and will help in the planning of future Summer Studies.

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*"When I've shipped on my last voyage
To the Isle of Kingdom Come,
Let me swell with the jolly Pirates
Singing o'riot and rum!"*

*Give me the touch of the breezes
And the thunder of the sea,
And a starlit night on the sand dune
and a Stuck-up to stroll with me!"*

*Clarence W. Young
Pirate, 1928*

Poet denizen of the Pirate's Den



Utility of the Future, continued

we incorporate the value of efficiency over time, and at ACEEE, we're kicking off new work to explore the use of first-year vs lifetime energy savings in Energy Efficiency Resource Standard goals, utility shareholder incentives, and resource planning. If you're interested in the topic but weren't able to join the informal session on Monday, please reach out.

One example of a policy area that might shift goals and valuation is beneficial electrification. As states and cities reach for climate goals and utilities look to new revenue streams in a shifting landscape, electrification is becoming a cornerstone of climate mitigation and utility business strategy. Unsurprisingly, sessions across the utilities, policy, and residential buildings panels focused on electrification in transportation, new construction, heat pumps, and broader policy design.

ACEEE views beneficial electrification as fuel switching strategies that reduce total energy consumption, lower customer

costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While it can be a win-win-win for utilities, customers, and the system as a whole, regional grid variability means that we need careful analysis and planning to avoid unintended consequences. As one example of our work in this area, we are hosting a one-day National Convening on Utilities and Electric Vehicles this fall to facilitate EV policies and practices that support utility business models while achieving these policy goals. If you're interested in getting involved, contact Siddiq Khan or Grace Relf from ACEEE.

It's the last day of Summer Study, so be sure to consider some of the remaining sessions related to the utility of the future. They will leave you with a forward-looking perspective as you head back to the 'real world.' And get ready for ACEEE's Energy Efficiency as a Resource Conference next fall in Minneapolis, where we'll explore these and other emerging issues.

"This isn't the end. It's not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning."
— Winston Churchill

"Finish strong." Don't leave hastily, nor forget what you set out to accomplish here; and as Aretha Franklin (RIP) said,
"Think! Think!" —Danny Parker

"Happy Trails! Until We meet Again!" —Dale Evans

Thanks from the Grapevine Staff

While the dance experience in Merrill Hall was just getting warmed up, the real fire was in the Grapevine office, when Leslie Jackson and Champion of Energy Efficiency Danny Parker danced to "I Heard It Through the Grapevine". Of course, the song is the traditional Grapevine tune.

We are wrapping up another week at Summer Study and it's been a delight. Our late nights putting the finishing touches to the Grapevine newsletter are just part of the experience. So are a few afternoon naps and missed breakfasts. It's been an honor to serve ACEEE and all of the attendees this year. We are most grateful to the ACEEE Summer Study staff for making their office our office each night, and for making our jobs easier by sending us much of the Grapevine material ahead of the conference.

We invite all of you to think of Home Energy as an outlet for your research results. The magazine was founded at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in 1984 to bring the research results from the national labs and colleges and universities, as well the wisdom of the practitioner community, to the weatherization professionals and home

performance contractors out in the field building and retrofitting homes. Send your article ideas to Jim Gunshinan, Editor, at JPGunshinan@homeenergy.org.

We wish everyone a safe return home and hope to see many of you again in two years.

(Warning, solicitation coming.) And don't forget to go to www.homeenergy.org to sign up for a subscription.



The Grapevine Staff burning the midnight oil. Steve Greenberg, Leslie Jackson, Jim Gunshinan, Chris Stratton, (l-r).

Play at Asilomar

