

**SESSION TITLE:**

Regional Role Models: What can be learned from organizations working to implement EE at the state and local level?

**SPEAKER SUMMARIES:**

Ed Miller, Program Director, Environment, Joyce Foundation

- Mr. Miller introduced the panelists, and he asked each of them to address relevant lessons learned from within their own organizations.

Susan Coakley, Executive Director, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships

- Ms. Coakley focused her remarks on the success that her organization has had in working in a partnership with the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and with state and local regulators in developing and sustaining a robust policy infrastructure supporting energy efficiency initiatives.

Jay Wrobel, Executive Director, Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance

- Mr. Wrobel discussed the strategies that his organization is using to overcome the challenges confronting energy efficiency policies in his region. These challenges include downward pressure on energy prices, new Governors and legislators who may not be supportive of energy efficiency programs, and the need to educate industries and consumers on the value of energy efficiency in terms of jobs and economic growth.

Mandy Mahoney, President, Southeast Energy Efficiency Alliance

- Ms. Mahoney focused her comments on successful programs in her region resulting from TVA partnerships. She also discussed harnessing the frustration that Farm Bureaus and manufacturers in the South are expressing about the absence of viable energy efficiency programs in their region.

Doug Lewin, Executive Director, South-central Partnership for Energy Efficiency as a Resource

- Mr. Lewin discussed the climate for energy efficiency programs in Texas and Oklahoma. He explained that programs based on leveraging market forces, competition, and price signals have gained significant traction in these States.

Elizabeth McDonald, President & CEO, Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance

- Ms. McDonald discussed the political and cultural barriers impeding energy efficiency programs in a resource-driven country. She also discussed how her organization has developed a narrative supporting energy efficiency based on the shared desire of a majority of Canadians to support environmental conservation and to save money.

**SESSION WRAP-UP**

Much of the discussion throughout this panel focused on regional challenges and the strategies that have been leveraged to combat these issues and achieve successful EE programs. The Northeast Region, which is home to six of the top ten states for EE, has implemented many successful programs that result from policymakers collaborating with NGOs to respond to a cultural interest in EE programs. With the success that has been realized in this region, there are concerns that interest groups opposed to EE programs may develop campaigns targeting any further gains as part of a nationwide agenda. The strategic response to this threat is to maintain widespread public messaging encouraging good policy leadership with new governors and state



legislators. In contrast to some of the other regions across the country, the abundance of natural gas has not had significant impact on EE programs in the Northeast because of constrained pipeline capacity in the region.

In the Midwest, there are currently abundant sources of energy, and this situation has had a negative impact on energy efficiency gains. As a result of downward pressure on energy prices, EE measures are less cost-effective. This challenge of downward pressure on energy prices may cause some state legislators in the Midwest to withdraw support for EE targets that have been enacted in the past. Advocates for EE in the Midwest view the best response to this challenge as educating and informing policymakers. All stakeholders, particularly industrial groups, must learn the value of EE in terms of jobs, health, comfort, savings, and economic benefit. Armed with this information, these business groups and private sector stakeholders can be very effective in maintaining pressure on state legislators to support EE programs.

In the Southeast, the states have not been as progressive in enacting EE policies. However, EE advocates are engaged in harnessing the frustration experienced by certain business sectors which would benefit from EE measures. As an example, Farm Bureaus are disadvantaged because they are competing with agricultural businesses in other states where incentive programs are lowering costs, and states in the Southeast are not offering such programs. This example echoes one of the common themes of this panel--the importance of educating manufacturers and industries so that they are interested in advocating the importance of EE programs with legislators.

In Texas and Oklahoma, industrial, residential, and commercial buildings are operating very inefficiently, and this electricity waste causes serious grid reliability issues at times of peak load. EE advocates in Texas have formed a consortium of over thirty companies and businesses to improve building performance and inform building owners of the immense savings that can be achieved through EE measures. The focus of the efforts of this consortium has been at the level of city leadership. In the short term, these efforts are centered on improving building performance. In the long term, these EE groups hope to create a market for EE that can be bid as a market resource into competitive electricity markets. Again, much of the strategy is directed at recognizing the cultural characteristics of the region. EE advocates in Texas think that Texans are generally supportive of using natural market forces and price signals to develop and sustain a marketplace for EE programs.

The CEO of the Canadian Energy Efficiency Association talked about the cultural and other factors that make Canada a very inefficient user of energy resources. Her organization has conducted a survey and found that Canadians generally have three important views relating to energy efficiency. The survey found that Canadians: (1) think that the economy is declining; (2) support a healthy environment; and (3) want to cut costs in their homes and businesses. Her organization has developed a strategy to harness this survey information, and, consistent with the message throughout much of the panel, this strategy is to educate businesses and manufacturers. Armed with the facts, these business interests can pressure legislators to support EE measures by emphasizing how businesses will save money, reduce water use, and improve process efficiency.

### **ACTION ITEMS & TAKEAWAYS**

- Educate and inform businesses and industry groups to take the EE message to legislators in terms that are effective in a specific region or state.
- Bring EE success stories within regions to the attention of businesses to develop grassroots support in that particular region.