Beyond Bill History: Evaluating Commercial Sector Energy Impacts Through a Multiple Approach Strategy

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In 1993, Puget Sound Power & Light Company completed an extensive impact evaluation of its Commercial Energy Management program. This program offers customized rebates to its commercial customers for the retrofit installation of energy-efficient equipment.

The evaluation addressed energy savings attributable to the measures and the program, persistence of measures and savings over time, naturally occurring conservation, spillover, and rebound effect. The evaluation combined several different approaches, including statistically adjusted engineering billing analysis, binary choice modeling, customer site visits, and customer telephone surveys. The analysis focused on participant cohorts for the years 1987-1991.

This paper briefly discusses the results obtained from these analytical approaches, as well as the lessons learned from applying these approaches. Other utilities with similar programs will benefit from both the results obtained and the lessons learned for conducting similar research.

Introduction

Demand-side management programs and the evaluation of those programs have matured and evolved at an astonishing pace over the last 5-10 years. As the magnitude of DSM efforts have grown, program evaluations have scrambled to address increasingly sophisticated questions posed by decision makers. To what extent do energy conservation measures (ECMs) and their associated energy savings persist over time? How much load impact was caused by the program that would not have otherwise occurred? Why are the evaluation estimates of savings different from the program engineering estimates?

As a contribution to the growing body of research on these issues, this paper describes the experience of Puget Sound Power & Light Company (Puget Power) in conducting an evaluation of a commercial retrofit rebate program. Analysis findings and lessons learned about conducting such evaluations are presented.

In 1993, Puget Power completed a comprehensive impact and process evaluation of its Commercial Energy Management Services (CEMS) program. The focus of this paper is the impact evaluation. The CEMS program offers cash grants to all existing commercial customers for the retrofit installation of a wide variety of ECMs for all major end uses. The grant is based on a customized energy audit of commercial facilities by a Puget Power field engineer. Puget Power has offered this program since 1980.

The evaluation of this program was developed through Puget Power's Technical Collaborative Group, which includes representatives of the various regulatory, regional power planning, environmental and other organizations that are typically parties in the Company's conservation proceedings. The evaluation results are intended to be applied in a forward-looking manner, not as a retroactive justification for any shareholder incentive payment. Primary emphasis was placed on the gross energy savings achieved over time by the program measures and "lessons learned" to improve program design and cost effectiveness. Net savings attributable to the program was a secondary objective.

Energy savings was analyzed through econometric analysis of customer billing records. Telephone and on-site surveys collected information on the retention of measures over time, levels of naturally occurring conservation (i.e., free-ridership), installation of additional ECMs not directly





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