

Abstract #: 226

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Abstract Title: What Inspires Action? Understanding Motivations and Feedback that Encourages Action in Commercial and Multifamily Sectors

Abstract Text:

In early 2015, Resource Media and the City of Seattle collaborated on research to gain a deeper understanding about what motivates and influences building owners and managers to make energy-saving building improvements. Phone interviews were conducted with 10 owners, managers and vendors with experience leading energy improvements in Seattle. Two sector-specific focus groups were conducted with 13 owners and managers of lower performing commercial and multifamily properties. The multifamily group was primarily comprised of managers of nonprofit, senior and low-income housing. Focus group participants were drawn from the City's records of properties that had complied with Seattle's benchmarking and reporting ordinance—as part of its efforts move participants from just reporting the data to using the information to drive energy efficiency improvements. (Approximately 3,200 buildings have been reported to date.) Participants were asked to review and react to a hypothetical building energy performance profile or “scorecard” based on their and comparable “peer” buildings' energy benchmarking data. This exercise provided solid insight into what energy and savings metrics are useful to the market and showed that the peer group selected for comparison is critically important to acceptance or outright dismissal of the energy profile. The authors will review the findings of the interviews and focus groups, and the reactions to the performance profiles, as well as discuss next steps for energy benchmarking outreach. They will also discuss the City's experience with creating, delivering and evaluating “Building Energy Performance” profiles for the office and multifamily buildings in summer 2015.