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Abstract Title: Business Sustainability Challenge: Not your Grandma's Energy Efficiency Program

Abstract Text:

Video for Presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTGVyWITTBU> The Business Sustainability Challenge (BSC) is an innovative new Energize Connecticut initiative. The two large utility companies in CT, United Illuminating and Eversource administer the Energize CT ratepayer funded programs. The BSC connects businesses with the resources they need to get on the path toward sustainability. It helps each business develop a strategic carbon and energy management plan as a foundation, then it moves on to integrating issues like waste, water, materials, employee engagement, sales, and innovation with the overall goal of industry leadership through net-zero and net-positive operations. Participating customers receive individual assistance through selected technical and strategy consultants, and share best practices and opportunities for collaboration through peer roundtables organized by segment - such as manufacturing or higher education. Through the roundtables, businesses can share ideas and have begun to develop collaborations that help them tackle trickier issues like renewable energy and cost-effective recycling and material recovery. The BSC is not your Grandma's energy efficiency programming: it is building a culture of broader and deeper energy and carbon gains through business competitiveness and cooperation. In the first year of its existence, over 20 companies have joined the BSC and are working together through the roundtable programming. Beyond energy and carbon improvements, recently two of the larger neighboring companies, a public water company and a global manufacturer are exploring sharing a waste and recycling hauler. Additionally, five universities are working towards an organic waste collaboration and a potential anaerobic digester.