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Title: Information is Power: Transforming the Real Estate Market

Abstract: Buying a home is the largest investment most of us ever make, but home buyers and renters typically receive little or no information about how much energy their home will need despite an overwhelming interest in having this knowledge. Real estate agents must live up to a variety of expectations, from accurately valuing a home to responding to questions from home buyers and sellers. Historically, this information was simply not available in the market. Home energy labeling programs now provide energy consumption and cost estimates for more homes than ever before. The primary barrier to widespread access to this information on the market is the lack of a system to transmit this data directly from sellers trying to market homes to the real estate listings buyers use to compare them. Enter Home Energy Labeling Information eXchange (HELIX). HELIX provides transparency in the real estate market by providing access to home energy information when it is available and approved by the seller. It is working to achieve a long-term market transformation goal where home energy information is populated in all residential real estate listings, which will lead to existing homes and buildings being benchmarked and retrofitted. HELIX is a flexible, customizable solution that can be used to help jurisdictions meet home energy labeling public policy goals. Capable of automatically populating the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) with home energy information, HELIX provides an interface to promote the value of home energy efficiency and renewable energy. As energy efficiency in the residential building sector is valued in home prices with shorter selling times, the incentive for energy efficiency retrofits will continue to grow. This presentation will introduce attendees to HELIX as a tool that can be used to change the behavior of the residential real estate market. It will show how real estate professionals can locate and track home energy information to ensure that all that high-performance data is populated into their MLS listings. The presentation will take a look at how HELIX is currently helping states and real estate professionals in addressing this information gap in the market.