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Title: Bill Alerts: A Tool to Reduce Energy or Empower Customers

Abstract: In 2016 SMUD made available to residential customers two types of alerts: Mid-Bill Alert (a text message of energy used by middle of bill period) and Bill-Threshold Alert (a text message sent when energy usage is higher than a pre-set threshold) with a goal to help customer better manage their energy usage, and possibly reduce their usage. Customers can sign up for either or both of these alerts by providing phone numbers. This research is to determine if a bill alert helps to lower customer's energy usage, if helps customers feel more empowered about their control of energy usage, and if help increase satisfaction with the utility. After adjusting temperature and other factors, SMUD used a paired t-test to compare daily average kWh pre- and post-alert. We found that the bill alerts did not have an impact on customers energy usage, but mid-bill showed an increase in customer satisfaction in digital tools to manage their energy usage. The implication of this research shows providing digital tools such as bill alerts can increase customer satisfaction towards their utility's digital capability, but not behavioral changes. Since this research, SMUD is also exploring mobile app notification as well as impact of TOD on customer's energy usage behavioral changes.