

New Survey Finds Educating Consumers and Updating Codes Critical to Reducing Demand for Electricity

WALTHAM, MA (March 30, 2009) – According to a new survey of energy efficiency professionals released by Opinion Dynamics Corporation, educating consumers and enhancing building codes and standards should be at the top of the list for recently appointed Energy Secretary Dr. Steven Chu. The survey of 65 industry leaders, conducted in February 2009, found that 20 percent of industry experts think upgrading the building codes and standards should be the secretary's top priority in order to meet the goal of reducing electricity demand by 15 percent over the next decade.

Results from the survey also show that 14 percent of industry leaders believe educating and raising awareness among consumers about energy efficiency should be a priority for meeting that goal. Suggestions from industry professionals include: running public education campaigns, targeting efforts at our nation's schools, and raising awareness of how people can reduce their energy consumption through mass marketing and targeted social media campaigns.

"These results show that the industry is moving away from a strictly engineering approach and towards a more market driven philosophy," said Brad Kates, President of Opinion Dynamics. "The importance of engaging and educating the public in energy efficiency has never been greater."

While the newly passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act requires states to provide assurances that they will implement advanced building codes, the legislation provides few specifics about the role of education in advancing energy efficiency. Given the findings of this survey, state energy officials should consider spending funds on educational efforts for residential and commercial customers.

Other key findings from the Opinion Dynamics 2009 Energy Efficiency Industry Survey include:

- More than half of industry professionals view marketing and outreach as the most important step toward energy efficiency when compared to workforce development and a government commitment to the development of new technologies.
- While there are diverse views about the future direction of the industry, industry professionals believe that new technologies, climate change, workforce development and consumer education will emerge as major issues over the next five years.
- Sixty eight percent of energy efficiency professionals think that framing energy efficiency as an economic issue is the best way to make the case for greater action when compared to linking energy efficiency with global warming, energy security or environmental issues.

This look at the future of the energy efficiency industry is the latest research effort by Opinion Dynamics to assess the opportunities and challenges facing the industry.

About Opinion Dynamics Corporation

Opinion Dynamics is a leading provider of market research and energy program evaluations for utilities and energy industry clients throughout North America. Opinion Dynamics is headquartered in Waltham, Mass., with offices throughout California. Opinion Dynamics' experience in the energy industry includes the assessment of energy efficiency and demand response measures, new construction research and practices, end user market research, product market assessments, process evaluations to determine program effectiveness, market characterization studies, and market segmentation.

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