

Part B

Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods

Customer Electricity Data Access and Control Questionnaire

B.1. Respondent Universe

The potential respondent universe for this collection is based on the number of known electricity providers as determined by Form EIA-861 to be 3,261.¹ The distribution of electricity providers according to EIA is as follows: Publicly-owned utilities – 2,006, Investor-owned utilities – 200, Cooperatives – 875, Federal power agencies – 9, Power Marketers – 171. These electricity providers serve a total of 143,494,481 customers, either full-service or delivery-only. DOE will seek responses from the entire respondent universe. DOE is not utilizing sampling since the data collected is likely to vary within a state or region and DOE wishes to provide data without aggregation.

B.2. Statistical Methodology

Because of the nature of this project as a “crowd-sourced” map, no statistical inferences will be drawn from the data. Rather, the responses will be ranked according to a DOE-developed ranking criteria based on industry best practices (see Supporting Statement Part A, Table 1). For individual data access categories such as time period, mode of delivery, frequency of data, or access to data, each response will be compared to the criteria and assigned a tier status. For example, if the utility responds that it only delivers energy data by mail, that utility would be assigned tier 1 status (Standard Access) for this category, as indicated in Table 1. The region corresponding to the utility’s service area would be colored on the map to reflect the tier status. For the “Standard Access” tier, this would be colored light gray.

For the policy cases, i.e., Benchmarking and Demand Response/Energy Efficiency, responses to each of the individual data access categories (time period, mode of delivery, etc.) will be compared to the ranking criteria. Based on these comparisons, the utility will be assigned a tier status for each policy case. Table 1 illustrates the criteria necessary to achieve each of the tiers. Utilities must provide all services designated by an “X” in the table to reach each tier. For example, in order to achieve Tier 1 status for commercial benchmarking, a utility must provide energy data that is available by meter, in aggregate for all meters in a building, provides downloadable access to the last 13 months of data and allows the customer to authorize third-party access to the data, all without an additional fee. If the utility meets these criteria, its service area will be coded dark blue to reflect a superior level of data access. The result will be displayed on a map so all visitors will be able to easily locate their electricity provider based on its service area and a description of their data access level. The information gathered by this collection will not be used to make assumptions about the sampling universe.

DOE consulted with EIA, Edison Electric Institute, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates, Critical Consumer Issues Forum, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Institute for Electric Efficiency and Tendril to design the questionnaire device and website.

We will invite electricity providers and visitors to the website to provide feedback on the information displayed in the map in order to maximize accuracy and verify results.

B.3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates

¹<http://38.96.246.204/cneaf/electricity/page/eia861.html>

Since this is a new approach, we do not have advance estimates of response rates. To achieve the energy efficiency goals set forth by the White House and the DOE (described in Part A), we rely on the collaboration and cooperation of the utilities. DOE expects electricity providers to understand and appreciate the value of informing consumers of their degree of access to their electricity usage data. We acknowledge that there is potential for a non-response bias during the early stage of this information collection. This may occur due to variable levels of enthusiasm among electricity providers to share their information on this issue. For example, providers that offer superior levels of access to customer data and who allow for third party sharing of data may be more likely to quickly respond. Non-respondents will be contacted by email and telephone until the data collection is complete.

B.4. Tests of Procedures

DOE worked with a survey professional to develop appropriate wording of the questions. Representatives of EIA, EEI and NRECA, including 3 potential utility respondents, reviewed or tested the draft questionnaire. The test consisted of emailing the draft questionnaire to the volunteer test subjects and gathering feedback by email and telephone. The test was designed to ascertain language improvements, troubleshooting opportunities, time and cost burden, and overall improvements to the questionnaire. Feedback was largely positive with minimal suggestions to change order or wording of questions. Respondents requested that we include a short description of the goals of the questionnaire. Changes were made at all stages of testing to incorporate feedback.

DOE worked closely with NREL to develop the website and test it for proper functionality and accurate reporting of the data.

B.5. Forms Consultation

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