

Bonneville Power Administration
Utility Sounding Board Charter
Effective January 2020

Background

At the end of the post-2006 efficiency program planning process, the Phase 1 Efficiency Workgroup provided the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) with their recommendations. As a result, a Phase 2 subcommittee was convened to assist BPA work through various program implementation issues. At the conclusion of the Phase 2 process, BPA collaborated with the members of the subcommittee to form the Utility Sounding Board (USB) to act as a consultative body to BPA on post-2006 efficiency programs, services, and regional infrastructure development. The role of the USB was reaffirmed during the Post 2011 process and it continues and acts as a consultative body to help guide BPA's energy efficiency activities.

Purpose

The USB is a consultative body on the implementation of BPA's efficiency programs. The USB, with a particular focus on what it takes in the market to achieve aMW targets, will provide recommendations on tools, materials, third party programs, regional infrastructure needs and peer sharing approaches to enhance the effectiveness (in terms of both implementation and cost of BPA and it's customer utility efficiency programs. The USB may address such issues as:

- 1) provide guidance and input on the strengths and weaknesses of existing programs
- 2) where to best focus BPA, third-party and utility efficiency efforts;
- 3) suggest means to make programs simple and implementable;
- 4) what program implementation, marketing tools and resources should be developed that multiple utilities can use;
- 5) how particularly effective existing programs and lessons learned can be leveraged;
- 6) how to best implement RTF technical recommendations on efficiency measures;
- 7) review and comment on BPA program implementation and marketing materials as they are being developed;
- 8) provide guidance to BPA to ensure they act in a way that meets the needs of end use customers, trade allies, and other stakeholders;

The Utility Sounding Board is not meant to replace existing regional utility roundtables, conferences or other formal or informal collaborative forums.

Additionally the USB will act as a conduit for the other focus groups and advisory bodies established by BPA (e.g. the industrial focus group). By attending other, more function specific, groups USB members will be able to:

- Report out on their ongoing discussion and actions
- Ensure that ongoing communications and activities are well aligned with USB discussions
- Provide input on choice points based on the opinions expressed during USB meetings.
- Ensure appropriate stakeholders are aware of the issues being addressed in function specific groups

Objectives

1. Provide a venue for peer sharing of efficiency program approaches, implementation and marketing materials.
2. Provide a mechanism for utilities and BPA to jointly develop recommendations for the best approach to achieve savings from energy efficiency actions
3. Assist in the planning and implementation of the annual utility conference and other customer oriented events
4. Work to improve the program initiatives, implementation, and marketing materials.
5. Support BPA's effort to provide outreach to all utilities regarding issues addressed by the USB.
6. Ensure that USB members have access to more detailed/specific issues (e.g. from other subcommittees) and bring those to the attention of BPA.

Utility Sounding Board Composition and Members

- The USB is composed of nine volunteer customer representatives members and one non-member facilitator from BPA's Energy Efficiency organization,
- The USB is comprised of a representative cross section of BPA's customer utilities taking into account the following characteristics:
 - Number of end-use/retail customers
 - Load size and characteristics
 - Geographic location
 - Small Rural and Residential or Non Small Rural and Residential.

If needed, the USB will select one of their members to serve as chairperson and one to serve as co-chair. These positions will be selected by collaborative consensus from eligible volunteers to serve a one year term.

Membership rotation

- The term of service is three years.
- Each year (in January) the 3 members who have the longest uninterrupted term of service will be replaced by 3 new members.
- Should an acceptable replacement member be unavailable an existing USB member can volunteer to serve another term.
- Priority will be given to those people or organizations that have not previously had representatives on the USB.
- An existing member shall be eligible to serve again after being off the board for three years.
- Should a member need to leave the USB for any reason another individual from that utility will be recruited to serve out the balance of the term. Should an acceptable individual not be available a former member will be asked to volunteer to serve out the balance of the term.

Selection of new USB members

BPA and USB members will maintain a list of interested utility staff. BPA will also send out a request for new USB members at each rotation based upon the need to maintain a representative body. The USB will work with BPA to select the three individuals chosen to serve.

In order to maintain the appropriate balance on the USB, prospective members will be asked to provide information on their utility as it relates to the criteria above as well as the reasons why they would make a positive addition to the USB.

The process for selecting new members will begin in the fall each year. Prospective members will be invited to a “meet and greet” session hosted during the annual Efficiency Exchange conference during which sitting members of the USB will have a chance to interact with potential new members. New members will be selected based on that conversation and the information provided by the applicants.

New membership will be finalized on or before the current member term ends. . New members will be invited to attend the final USB meeting before their term of service begins to observe group norms and protocols (e.g., December meeting). New members will officially begin service in the January in person USB meeting.

Meetings

The USB will meet on the second Wednesday, every other month at an announced location in Portland, OR. These meetings will typically be scheduled from 8:30 am -2:30pm. On the alternate months, the USB will hold a conference call which will typically be scheduled from 8:30 am – 11:00am, also on the second Wednesday of the month.

Communication to the Region

The Facilitator will provide a high level summary of the topics discussed and the input, questions and concerns expressed by the USB during that discussion. This summary will be distributed to the USB members and made available to regional utilities upon request. Anyone with input on the topics discussed will be encouraged to contact a USB member. Topics deemed sensitive and or not ready for broad publication may be removed at the discretion of the USB. BPA and other organizations presenting will indicate what if any material being presented is potentially sensitive.

When and if the USB determines the need to communicate a formal position on an issue, they will do so via a formal letter sent to BPA management and other appropriate stakeholders.

Decision Making

USB decisions will be made and positions will be established by collaborative consensus. If consensus cannot be reached the position will not go forward, but members can opt to dissent but consent to action.

Group Norms

Respect: Be courteous and seek to understand team members’ ideas and perspectives without judging motives, character, or integrity. Give everyone the opportunity to speak.

Meetings: Be respectful of people's time, including: attend each meeting, start and end meetings on time; clarify purpose and desired outcome up front; stick to agenda – stay focused and concise; take responsibility for preparing and sharing documents in advance; read materials prior to the meeting in which they will be discussed; and take responsibility for catching up, if you're late or absent.

Perspective: In addition to your own utility perspective, USB members should also speak to a broader utility/regional perspective.

Conflict Resolution: Communicate concerns and support mutual problem solving by dealing directly with others in an open and honest manner.

Input: When practical, USB shall seek alignment on input/recommendations in addition to providing individual member input when needed.

Follow Through: Members and BPA do what they say they will do; action items are completed and results reported in subsequent meetings, as appropriate.

Have Fun: Look for opportunities to make things enjoyable; display a sense of humor; lighten up!

BPA Role

A BPA EE staff member will serve as non-member facilitator for USB meetings. It is intended that this facilitator will serve at least a three year term. In addition to this facilitator, when possible, member of the BPA management team and or a staff member from another EE department will attend in-person meetings to provide exposure and context outside of the program marketing group and management team.

BPA will prepare the agenda (with input from the USB), necessary background materials and will facilitate the meetings. BPA will provide an agenda for each meeting preferably a week in advance.

Changes to this Charter

Changes will be the result of a collaborative consensus and will be vetted through the USB and BPA EE Management.

The charter will be formally revisited every three years beginning January 2017 to assess the need for any necessary changes or updates. Changes outside of this cycle will be agreed to by the consensus of USB members.

Revised January 2020