

DOCKETED

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Bright Power Comments on AB 802 Benchmarking Provisions

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Bright Power Comments on Building Energy Use Disclosure and Public Benchmarking Program Mandated under Assembly Bill 802, Docket #: 15-OIR-05

Dear California Energy Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the implementation of building energy use data access provision of AB 802.

Bright Power is an energy management firm founded in 2004 with a focus on serving as energy management partner for owners and managers of multifamily buildings. Since 2010 we have provided an online benchmarking service, EnergyScoreCards to over 20,000 multifamily buildings across the country, including over 4,000 in California. We see benchmarking energy and water consumption as a critical foundation for other energy savings efforts, and work to assist our clients not only in data collection, quality control, analysis and interpretation, but also in using the data to catalyze and guide energy and water savings efforts. As of June 2016 we will have submitted over 4,000 compliance benchmarks on behalf of buildings in jurisdictions that require annual benchmarking, including NYC, DC, Boston, Chicago, Seattle, and Philadelphia.

Bright Power applauds the passage of AB 802 and looks forward to assisting building owners and policymakers throughout the state in ensuring the law is implemented successfully and meets the intent of spurring energy efficiency and renewable energy activities throughout the state.

Based on our experience providing benchmarking services we would like to respectfully suggest that the CEC consider four specific changes to the proposed utility requirements around provision of information. Both suggestions refer specifically to Section 2. Data Access (4) E. in the presentation submitted 3/24/2016, which states the utilities would be required to provide "The energy delivered to the building by the utility by energy type for the 12 calendar months prior to the date of request, aggregated for each calendar month."

Suggestion 1: Require utilities to provide raw utility data by utility account or service class

While aggregating whole building data solves the cost and authorization issues associated with collecting individual apartment accounts in multifamily buildings, it also drastically decreases the granularity and usefulness of the data. For instance, an owner of a multifamily building is then unable to see which portions are paid for by residents vs. management. We suggest a middle ground of asking for anonymous data to be identified by **service class**. Similar to the aggregate reporting mechanism used in NYC, this allows owners (or their service providers) to separate apartment accounts from house meters, increasing the value of analysis, and enabling much better troubleshooting of energy issues identified in the data.

Suggestion 2: Require utilities to share utility data with actual meter-read dates.

There are various methods of 'calendarizing' utility data, and the exact method used can have real implications on the usefulness of the data for measurement and verification and benchmarking, particularly in regards to weather-normalization. For third-party analysis companies such as Bright Power, having the actual dates during which the energy was consumed allows much more precise analysis, alignment with temperature or humidity data, and greater understanding of energy use



patterns. If utilities do this step before owners and third-parties receive the data, we fear it will be harder to analyze and interpret the data, and the exact method used by the utility may not be transparent.

Suggestion 3: Require consistent spreadsheet formats for data transmission, in addition to ESPM

Utility integration with ESPM is a huge benefit. However, having a consistent format by which utilities provide data electronically to owners or authorized third-parties has additional benefits and enables a much broader range of energy services. Standardizing around Green Button and requiring all utilities in the state to provide Green Button data on request (as some CA utilities already do) would be a simple way to accomplish this.

Suggestion 4: Expect that some data collection will be best done by owners or service providers.

The more utilities can simplify the data collection process the better, but some things are easier for owners or third-party service providers to iron out. For instance, matching utility accounts and meters to physical building addresses can sometimes be tricky and require a person familiar with a property to determine with confidence. Ultimately it should be the owner's responsibility to ensure that all accounts and providers associated with a building are correctly matched the address and the property in Portfolio Manager.

As a more general comment, it is our experience that compliance benchmarking laws can have a powerful effect on the market. The laws bring awareness of energy and water consumption to building owners who may not have previously understood that there were opportunities in their buildings. However, simply the act of collecting data doesn't produce this impact on its own. Rather it is through repeated exposure to meaningful analysis, discussion with knowledgeable peers or technical partners, and typically additional financial and regulatory incentives *to take action* that benchmarking feedback has its real impact. Because benchmarking is merely the first step in the energy management process, it is important that policymakers think about the connections to subsequent steps (including strategic energy planning, energy audits, retrofits, operations and maintenance improvements and others). We have found that three critical factors in seeing this ripple effect from benchmarking are:

- Nurturing partnerships, services, or providing resources to ensure owners analyze and understand energy use and how to act on the information
- Offering support for portfolios and real estate organizations, not just buildings individually
- Providing support or incentives for ongoing, long-term energy management activities – not just one-time upgrades

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be of further assistance in thinking through implementation options and implications for AB 802.

Best regards,



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