

Commercial Building Energy Labeling Working Group
Meeting Notes
May 8, 2020

Approval of Minutes from 4/10/20 meeting

- Motion to approve – Michael Russom, second Keith Downes. Motion approved by voice vote.

Discussion: Should we consider a mandatory or voluntary recommendation

- Many discussed that if it stays purely voluntary there would likely be very low participation.
- Should look further into whether there is more uptake in efficiency projects due to benchmarking (EEU's previously have said there isn't).
- Is mandatory benchmarking useful in a tight market?
- PSD wouldn't be able to take on administration, enforcement, etc. at this time due to resource limitations. So need to discuss further if its recommended to be mandatory, who would be responsible for admin. and enforcement. Or no enforcement, even if mandatory?
- Also look at incentivization for participation?
- Investigate a phase-in approach for mandatory benchmarking, starting with the largest commercial buildings.

Reports from Subcommittees - each subcommittee report to include any requests of the Research subcommittee to investigate specific items

Group 1: Research Progress in other jurisdictions

- Outstanding research question - Is there a comprehensive list of commercial buildings in VT? There isn't and may need to survey all towns to get. However Dept. of Taxes is working on a statewide grand list, timeline to complete was 2021, but with existing situation would likely slide a bit. Still trying to find out if that information would be available.
- Will have a call with DC to discuss their program today.

Group 3: Building Performance Reporting

- Have started writing report for the subcommittee.

Group 4: Management

- Met and discussed the pieces that would go into the full report. Will take the subcommittee recommendations and put together.
- Discussed administration of program. PSD noted that they were not able to be the administrator. EVT is administrator for the residential initiative. May be able to administer on the commercial side but do not want to be an enforcer. Could be other entities that would administer as well.
- State registry – could put out RFI for who would be interested in providing benchmarking.
- Should we look into HELIX, which has connection to MLS for storage of data/labels?
- Need basic cost estimates for recommendations. Is there no/low cost alternatives to what is being proposed?
- Once decision has been made on voluntary vs. mandatory can put together a schedule for phase-in if that's the direction that's been decided.
- Identify evaluators that could evaluate program, could send out RFI.

Report of Subgroup #2 - Building Assessors reports out on certification requirements, bonding, insurance, provision of QA, and training recommendations

- A lot of the work of this group depends on decision of other groups. Assumed voluntary program and assumed that EPA Energy Star Portfolio Manager (ESPM) would be the tool used for the draft recommendations. If these assumptions change then they can revisit their conclusions/recommendations.
- EPA provides online training for ESPM, but are recommending that there might need to be an entity selected to provide supplemental statewide training in VT.
- Recommending to follow EPS ESPM requirements that any building owner can entire data for benchmarking, but to be certified as Energy Star would need to be professionally verified as required by EPA.
- Technical resource center, including call center and QA, could be provided by a third-party vendor. There are vendors that provide training and technical resources/services. Group is recommending that a third-party vendor is selected to provide these services.
- Discussion:
 - We need to think through the costs for these recommendations, e.g. QA
 - Suggestion to ask Cx Associates, which provides ESPM services for Burlington
 - ESPM does not have the capability to label all buildings, e.g. mixed-use with residential
 - Program needs to focus on the next step after benchmarking – provide info on how to make energy improvements.
 - Need to look at this from the perspective of a renter as well as building owner/manager
 - For renters of commercial space, the appropriateness of the space for their specific needs is of primary concern – energy is low on the priority list.
- Next steps for subcommittee:
 - Need to think through some of the different scenarios for how the program will roll out.
 - Hesitant to review other tools other than ESPM. Will discuss what to do with buildings that can't use ESPM.
 - Will look at costs for recommendations.
 - Will present a full narrative version of their recommendations for next meeting.

Discussion and next steps

- Discussed having subcommittee write-ups 1 month earlier than schedule currently dictates. Workplan will be updated accordingly.
- Request that subcommittee and overall working group documents be uploaded to sharepoint site.