

Meeting Notes

Natural Gas Demand Side Management Evaluation Advisory Committee (EB-2022-0295)

Meeting #28

Meeting Date: May 6, 2025

Time: 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Virtual Meeting (MS Teams)

Attendees

EAC Members	Affiliation
Bailey Kaufman	Enbridge Gas Inc. representative
Kristina Tremblay	Enbridge Gas Inc. representative
Robert Wirtsafter	Non-utility member (Wirtsafter Associates, Inc.)
Katherine Johnson	Non-utility member (Johnson Consulting Group)
Chris Neme	Non-utility member (Energy Futures Group)
Dan Violette	Non-utility member (Apex Analytics)

Additional Attendees	Role/Affiliation
DNV Team	OEB's Evaluation Contractor
Alice Herrera	IESO
Luke Bond	IESO

OEB Staff	Role
Josh Wasylyk	OEB Staff/EAC Chair, Senior Advisor, Application Policy and Conservation
James Smith	OEB Staff, Senior Advisor, Application Policy and Conservation
Taiwo Ishmail	OEB Staff, Advisor, Application Policy and Conservation

Purpose

These notes summarize the discussions of the Evaluation Advisory Committee.

Meeting Agenda:

1. **Residential Adaptive Thermostat Rebate Offer Process Evaluation – Discussion** (50 mins)
2. **Custom Boilers – Impact of Amendment 15 – Discussion** (10 mins)
3. **Project Status Update** (25 mins)
 - Technical Resources Manual (TRM)
 - Annual Verification Process and Schedule
 - Custom Commercial and Industrial Net-to-Gross
 - 2025/2026 Evaluation Measurement & Verification (EM&V) RFPs

Welcome

OEB staff welcomed the group and provided an overview of the topics to be discussed.

1. Residential Adaptive Thermostat Rebate Offer Process Evaluation – Discussion

Item Description	Discussion Comments/Outcome	Action Items
OEB and Enbridge led the group discussions on the Enbridge-led process evaluation of the residential adaptive thermostat rebate offer.	Enbridge Gas staff provided an overview of the process evaluation of the residential adaptive thermostat rebate offer. The process evaluation focused on participating customers who did not register a successful Wi-Fi connection (or “ping”) with ecobee. The study asked questions to help understand the challenges customers may have faced or perceived and to provide insights into potential program performance improvement opportunities that could reduce barriers associated with installing and connecting the thermostat to Wi-Fi. Enbridge and OEB staff explained that ecobee ping rates are used to inform adjustment factors applied to gross natural gas savings from smart thermostats. In program years 2021 and 2022, the adjustment factor used was approximately 85%, meaning 15% of participant savings were excluded from the year-end performance. The survey results found that 87.5% of no ping respondents indicated the ecobee device was installed, and 95% of those had connected their devices to Wi-Fi. EGI and OEB staff noted that additional technical reasons may also result in an unsuccessful ping response (e.g., use of a VPN or certain parental controls). Based on these reasons, Enbridge noted that the ecobee ping rates might be understating the actual installation rates, negatively	OEB staff to collaborate with DNV to explore alternative approaches for the process evaluation and study.

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	impacting its claimed natural gas savings and the overall performance of the offering. EGI suggested that the OEB and the EC consider a different or revised methodology to determine the adjustment factor for natural gas savings from the smart thermostat offer. EAC members generally agreed that OEB staff and the EC should consider the findings of the process evaluation and general ping response rate as part of the 2024 Annual Verification process. EAC Members discussed the merit of the survey, the objective of the process evaluation, and considerations for next steps. EAC members noted several potential concerns, including response bias, the low response rate, and potential limitations in how and where the survey responses could be applied. EAC members also raised concerns about relying on the Ecobee ping rate as a savings adjustment factor, given that Ecobee thermostats account for only 10% of smart thermostat participants. While this approach has been used in previous savings adjustments, members highlighted its limited representativeness remains a point of concern. However, EAC members agreed that the results of the study warrant further consideration of limitations to the ecobee ping response rate as an adjustment factor. OEB staff committed to investigating the topic further and discussing additional evaluation options with DNV.	
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2 Amendment 15 – Discussion

Item Description	Discussion Comments/Outcome	Action Items
Enbridge Gas led a discussion on the change in boiler efficiency standards (Amendment 15) and its impact on Enbridge's offers.	Enbridge provided an overview of the change in boiler efficiency standards through Amendment-15 and its impact on their offerings, seeking feedback from EAC members. Amendment-15 in Ontario changes the minimum efficiency allowed for boilers starting in 2025. Hence, changes in the code and standards imply that Enbridge Gas must adjust its 2025 targets accordingly. To align with the new efficiency standard, Enbridge explained the analysis it conducted to determine the impacts on 2025 natural gas savings targets expected from the reduction in allowable boiler projects originally anticipated when it developed its 2023 DSM plan. Enbridge described that by assessing 2021 to 2023 program results. The results indicated the following reductions in natural gas savings targets for the three offers where commercial boilers are included:	Enbridge to provide more details to members for review and consideration, including methodology, draft calculations and any other information available.

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	- Affordable Multi-Residential: 34% - Large Commercial: 21% - Small Commercial: 11% EAC members requested that Enbridge provide more details about the target revision methodology and for further review and feedback.	
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3. Project Status Update – Discussion

Item Description	Discussion Comments/Outcome	Action Items
DNV and OEB staff provided status updates on various ongoing evaluation activities.	DNV and OEB provided EAC member status updates on the following projects: TRM Update: Three updated substantiation documents have been submitted to the OEB, including Residential Smart Thermostats, Destratification Fans, and Commercial Hybrid Heat Pump Rooftop Units. The EC team is currently reviewing the updates. Enbridge is currently conducting research to support additional updates. Annual Verification: The DNV team is currently developing the 2025 Annual Verification (AV) work plan, which will be provided to the EAC for review. Custom Commercial and Industrial NTG Round 2: DNV updated the EAC to indicate that, following the completion of the sample design, it is proceeding with the initial phase of implementing the updated free ridership evaluation, including outreach to participating customers. 2025/2026 OEB Evaluation Procurements: OEB staff informed the EAC that progress continues on issuing a request for proposal to undertake additional evaluation work.	N/A

List of Action Items

No.	Action Item	Assignment/Owner	Due Date
1.	OEB staff and DNV to explore alternative approaches for determining an adjustment factor for natural gas savings from the Adaptive Thermostat Offer.	OEB staff and DNV	TBD

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No.	Action Item	Assignment/Owner	Due Date
2.	Enbridge Gas to send more about Amendment 15 and 2025 TAM details to members for review and consideration.	Enbridge	TBD

Meeting Adjourned: 3:00 pm.

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