

2015 OPALCO Member Survey

Title Page

Page description:

We need your help as we begin the 2016 budget process. With changing weather and energy usage patterns, the upcoming submarine cable replacement project and rising power costs, our landscape is changing. We are committed to providing the same level of service (reliability, safety and customer service) to our membership and, given our co-op cost-of-service business model, that means trade-offs. This survey seeks member input on rates and funding priorities.

This is a short survey that should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Please have your OPALCO account number at the ready for the end of the survey. If you include your account number, we will give you a \$5 bill credit to thank you for your participation in the survey. The survey is anonymous – account numbers are extracted from the data for the sole purpose of applying a credit to your account.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Questions, pg1

Page description:

OPALCO has a strong commitment to energy efficiency, conservation and local renewable power. Since 2007, we have issued \$2,245,286 in rebates to members for a total of 11,306,637 in kWh savings.

Historically, our funding for these programs has come through Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Our program has been so successful that, as of the end of 2015, we will have spent our BPA allocation through October 2017.

For the next two years, how should OPALCO support energy efficiency and conservation? The mechanisms available for self-funding are 1) by increasing rates or 2) passing on new revenue gains (after we meet our fixed costs) we could get by adding new electric loads, for example, through members switching from propane to electric heat.

1. Should OPALCO further increase rates to fund energy efficiency and conservation programs during this interim period of the next two years while BPA rebate funding is not available?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

2. Should OPALCO put these programs on hold during this interim period?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

3. How much more are you willing to pay on a monthly basis to fund these programs?

- ☐ \$1 - 3
- ☐ \$4 - 6
- ☐ \$7 - 9
- ☐ \$10 - 12
- ☐ More than \$12

4. Which of the following programs (if any) would you want OPALCO to continue by raising rates? (click as many as you want)

- ☐ Energy efficiency rebates (similar to existing program) for all members
- ☐ Low-income rebates and weatherization programs
- ☐ Snapshot Home Energy Assessments
- ☐ Funding to local partners for education and outreach
- ☐ None

Intro into EV & Propane Switch

Page description:

In addition to cutting expenses and raising rates to meet our rising cost of service revenue requirements, we have also been looking for ways to add new electric usage loads as revenue generators – as long as they meet our criteria for low carbon impact and provide benefits to our membership.

We've identified two possible programs: (1) encouraging members to switch their heating source from propane to electricity and, (2) encouraging members to purchase Electric Vehicles (EVs). These new, efficient energy loads will enable us to pass through savings to members in the form of incentives.

5. Which of the two proposed incentive programs (if any) do you think OPALCO should support?

- ☐ Switching from propane to electric heating (ductless heat pumps and heat pump water heaters)
- ☐ The purchase of electric vehicles and home charging stations
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Both

6. Which incentive program(s) would you personally be most likely to apply for?

- ☐ Switching from propane to electricity
- ☐ The purchase of electric vehicles and home charging stations
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Both

MORE and Solar

Page description:

Currently, co-op incentives for renewable energy are limited to what is provided by members' voluntary donations to the M.O.R.E. (member owned renewable energy) Program. There are also state and federal incentives available to members.

Regardless of incentives to members, there are fixed costs to accommodate, monitor and control member-owned renewable power on our grid. During this period of revenue volatility and major capital expense, how should OPALCO fund renewable energy?

7. How should OPALCO support members who generate renewable power? (click as many as you want)

- ☐ Keep it as is – voluntary member donations only (plus staff time)
- ☐ Increase rates to provide additional incentives to members for roof-top solar
- ☐ Increase rates to construct community solar projects (Co-op owned)
- ☐ Increase rates to provide incentives for both roof-top and community solar projects

8. Which incentive program(s) would you personally be most likely to apply for?

- ☐ Switching from propane to electricity
- ☐ The purchase of electric vehicles
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Both

Education

Page description:

OPALCO has made significant investments in education towards energy efficiency and conservation over the past two years. Please let us know how we are doing.

9. What do you think the long term benefits of energy efficiency and conservation are? (click as many as you want)

- ☐ Reduce energy waste
- ☐ Zero load growth for the Co-op (avoid higher-cost energy purchases)
- ☐ Reduction of carbon impact
- ☐ Increase the comfort and value of your home
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Don't know

10. What percentage of your energy usage do you think you can save through energy efficiency improvements?

- ☐ 0% - 20%
- ☐ 20% - 40%
- ☐ 40% - 60%
- ☐ Over 60%
- ☐ Don't know

11. Have you participated in any of the San Juan Islands Conservation District education and outreach programs? (click as many as you want)

- ☐ Energy Fairs
- ☐ Solar for Schools
- ☐ Speaker Series
- ☐ Energy Roundtable meetings
- ☐ None of the above

12. Please rate your experience with the Energy Fairs program:

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Not Good	Not Very Good
Energy Fairs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Please rate your experience with the Solar for Schools program:

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Not Good	Not Very Good
Solar for Schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. Please rate your experience with the Speaker Series program:

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Not Good	Not Very Good
Speaker Series	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. Please rate your experience with the Energy Roundtable meetings program:

	Very Good	Good	Neutral	Not Good	Not Very Good
Energy Roundtable meetings	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Intro about Rate Trade Offs

Page description:

The infrastructure required to serve 20 islands is expensive. No matter how we go forward with energy efficiency, conservation and renewable energy, there are fixed costs to maintain our service levels (reliability, safety and customer service) that do not change.

The fundamental questions about rates are 1) who pays for the fixed costs of our system and 2) what are the trade-offs that come with any rate structure?

Please note that in either rate scenario below, a low carbon impact is realized. In the conservation rate structure, it's through avoided use; in the fuel-switching rate structure, it's through replacing propane and gasoline usage with clean and renewable hydropower.

16. In the 2016 budget, the top priority for our rate structure should be:

- ☐ **Encourage conservation:**
higher kWh charges, lower facilities charge. Benefits: more control of your bill. Trade offs: Co-op revenue volatility based on weather and usage; part-time members are subsidized by full-time members for cost of year-round infrastructure
- ☐ **Encourage fuel switching:**
lower kWh charges, higher facilities charge. Benefits: reduces revenue volatility; encourages new load and revenue; part-time members pay their cost of service. Trade offs: less reward for conservation, less control over your bill.
- ☐ **Somewhere in the middle:**
balance revenue volatility with member control over their bills
- ☐ Don't Know

17. Please rank how important the following programs are, considering that they would be funded by increasing rates:

	Very Important and Essential	Important	Neutral	Not Important	Do Not Support
Rate Relief Program for qualified seniors and low-income member households	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Energy Efficiency and Conservation rebates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Support of Member Owned Renewable Energy (beyond voluntary donations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. For the next two years, there is no outside funding from BPA for energy efficiency and conservation rebates. How should OPALCO continue to support our mission of environmental stewardship and reward our members' commitment to energy efficiency?

Demographic Questions

19. Do you live full-time in San Juan County?

☐ Yes

☐ No

How many months do you reside in San Juan County?

☐ Less than 3 months

☐ 3-6 months

☐ More than 6 months

☐ Other

20. Do you rent or own your primary residence in the San Juan Islands?

☐ Rent

☐ Own

☐ Other

21. What island is your co-op membership on?

☐ San Juan Island

☐ Lopez Island

☐ Orcas Island

☐ Other

22. What is your work status?

☐ Work outside the home

☐ Work at home

☐ Student

☐ Retired

☐ Not actively working

☐ Other

23. What year were you born?

24. What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Prefer Not To Answer

25. What is your household income?

- ☐ Less than \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000-\$35,000
- ☐ \$35,000-\$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000-\$75,000
- ☐ \$75,000-\$100,000
- ☐ Greater than \$100,000

26. How would you characterize your household income?

- ☐ Low income
- ☐ Median income
- ☐ High income
- ☐ Don't know

27. How many adults live in your household (including you)?

28. How many children live in your household?

29. What devices do you use to access the internet at your house? (click as many as you want)

- ☐ Smart Phone
- ☐ Laptop Computer
- ☐ Desktop Computer
- ☐ Tablet / iPad
- ☐ Other
- ☐ None of the above

30. How many devices total?

- ☐ 1 - 2
- ☐ 3 - 5
- ☐ 6 - 8
- ☐ Over 8

31. May we follow up with you to address any issues you raised?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

32. Email Address

33. Newsletter

☐ Sign me up for the newsletter

34. What is your account number?

Your account number is needed so that we can apply the \$5 credit to your bill for completing the survey. This information will be separated from the data and is not otherwise cross-referenced by OPALCO. Your account number can be found on your bill, by logging into your account on [SmartHub](#) or by calling 376-3500 Monday through Friday between 8 AM – 4:30 PM.

Survey data is anonymous. Account numbers are tied only to the \$5 credit.

Thank you!

Thank You!

Thank you! Results will be published online in November. Your feedback will go directly to OPALCO leadership to inform budget and rate decisions this fall.

