

## 2008 Behavior, Energy and Climate Change Conference Roundtable Abstract

### 6. Making the Case: What are the Best Means of Measuring and Evaluating the Success of Behavior-Oriented Initiatives?

Moderator: Susan Fischer, California Air Resources Board

**Abstract:** Meeting near-term (AB 32) and long-term (2050) climate goals will require extensive behavioral changes in home energy and water use, business operations, and transportation patterns. Historically, energy-oriented behavioral change campaigns and exploitation of demographic determinants to streamline public outreach have been sparse, despite success of many well-designed and adequately funded initiatives to induce change in sizable portions of target populations when behavioral change has tangible benefits. Previous programmatic response to energy consumption issues have generally focused on technology solutions, with limited understanding of behavior and uneven evaluation of results.

Interest in social science research delineating behavioral and demographic determinants of greenhouse gas emissions is rapidly growing as government agencies recognize the necessity and potentially high returns of this knowledge. Establishing criteria for success, measuring outcomes of various strategies, and evaluating programs is critical to designing and implementing behavioral change and outreach initiatives. Moreover, appropriate prioritization of these campaigns relative to conventional regulatory or emerging market mechanisms, for which evaluation may be more straightforward, requires robust assessment of efforts.

This roundtable will consider:

- Successful behavioral change initiatives, not necessarily energy- or climate-related (e.g., use of seat belts): What factors led to success?
- What are appropriate criteria for success of behavioral change and outreach initiatives undertaken by State agencies?
- Measuring impact of energy-related initiatives in California that have aimed to modify consumer behavior;
- How to evaluate programs and communicate results so that they receive appropriate emphasis.

**Bio:** Susan L. Fischer, Ph.D., M.S.E., coordinates research planning for the California Air Resources Board (ARB), with emphases on fostering behavioral change research efforts and facilitating interagency climate change research coordination. Prior to joining the research planning and climate change outreach section of ARB, Dr. Fischer served as Science, Technology, and Health Policy Advisor to former Chairman Robert F. Sawyer. As a postdoctoral scholar at University of California, Berkeley, she managed and conducted an independent field investigation of a rural energy project in Jilin province, China. Her doctoral research in rural China comprised public health inquiry into indoor air quality and its determinants, engineering analysis of particle-monitoring equipment in a rural field context, and ethnographic research describing a village-scale energy project. Susan also has experience as a laboratory researcher with Princeton University, where she earned her M.S.E. investigating combustion of dimethyl ether, a fuel with applications in diesel engines and in household cooking stoves.

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