

Rep. Sloan Speaks at International Energy Conference

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) spoke at the Third Transactive Energy Systems Conference in Portland, Oregon. The conference was organized by the GridWise Architecture Council (GWAC). GWAC is a 13-member organization dedicated to developing the theoretical frameworks for aspects of the evolving national electric grid. Sloan is a member of the organization.

Sloan presented a way to depict transactive energy systems using Dmitri Mendeleev's Chemical Periodic Table as a model. High school and college chemistry students become very familiar with the Periodic Table because it contains all known natural elements (e.g., oxygen, nitrogen, lead) and provides a way to visualize their combination (e.g., water is H₂O).

Transactive energy systems are electric systems in which price signals between utilities, customers, customer generators (e.g., roof top solar), and others decide whether to purchase electricity, sell electricity, or reduce their electric consumption. The transactions or lack of transactions have monetary benefits and consequences for the parties involved.

"This is a highly confusing and technical way of saying that as home and business owners increasingly have the ability to use their "smart phones" to control the operation of smart devices like thermostats, air conditioners and hot water heaters, they will be able to save or earn money by shifting their energy use in response to price signals from the utility," Sloan said. "In addition, those customers with the capability of generating electricity or that have energy storage devices will be able to sell power to the utility or other customers, again based on price signals."

Simple transactive energy systems are being developed and the New York Public Service Commission is the leader in moving utilities and customers into more equal and interactive relations. A number of major issues must still be resolved, including how are the fixed costs of maintaining the utility's infrastructure to be paid by customers who partially generate their own electricity and how are the interests of lower income customers protected by the state regulators during these utility-customer transactions.

Other speakers at the conference included the Chairwoman of the New York State Public Service Commission, CEO of the Bonneville Power Administration, Executive Vice President of the Edison Electric Institute, Chairman of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, and the Smart Grid Coordinator in the U.S. Department of Energy.

Sloan also spoke to a graduate-level energy policy course at Portland State University. Class members are mid-career-level professionals in energy and government.

Sloan is serving his 11th term in the Kansas House of Representatives and serves on committees advising the Department of Energy, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and professional organizations for legislators.

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