

PANEL 6: Utilities and the Future

For years there has been a running discussion about the “utility of the future.” The business model of utilities today was invented over 100 years ago and has not changed significantly since. Societal decarbonization, however, requires a more integrated and interdependent energy system. What happens in one place no longer only matters to just those “downwind”—we are all downwinders! And with trillions of dollars being invested in solving this equation by the Biden administration, the money to advance future-oriented utilities might be at hand.

This panel seeks insights exploring the building blocks of utilities of the future to enable decarbonization advancements in building technologies, lessons learned from utility demonstrations and pilots, and innovative program models. The intended result is to have discussions and unearth research results and best practices on how utilities can plan, operate, and manage an energy system that supports overall energy decarbonization. Papers should provide insights on:

- Qualitative lessons learned and qualitative results on advance technology performance in demonstrations, deployments, and pilots
- How utilities can best serve dynamic customer and occupant needs, using results from utility pilots and programs
- Innovative approaches that address historically underserved market segments
- Lessons learned in low-income and other disadvantaged community efforts that inform how utilities can usher in societal decarbonization in an equitable way
- Breakthrough technologies and programs that help “cross the chasm” and enable market adoption and development low-carbon/zero-carbon buildings and communities