

Memo



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY &
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

To: EERMC Members
From: Rachel Sholly, Consultant Team
CC: Becca Trietch
Date: October 8, 2020
RE: EERMC 2020 Public Education Events update

CONSULTANT TEAM

For the third consecutive year, the Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council (EERMC) has partnered with University of Rhode Island (URI) Cooperative Extension to offer public education around energy efficiency. With oversight and input from the Consultant Team and the EERMC Education Working Group, URI organized this year's EERMC Public Forum and the URI Plugged into Energy Research (PIER) Lecture Series with funding from the Council's education budget. This memo summarizes the two events.

EERMC PUBLIC FORUM

The fourth annual EERMC Public Forum, *COVID-19 Crossroads: Achieving Equitable Health Outcomes Through Energy Efficiency*, was held virtually on Thursday, September 24, 2020. Driven by the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Forum focused on the relationships between public health, equity, and energy efficiency and featured health and energy experts from across the U.S. The recorded webinar can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y08LNU5vzs&feature=youtu.be>.

Speakers:

- WELCOME: Tony Hubbard, EERMC Chair
- KEYNOTE: Reilly Loveland, New Buildings Institute, Portland, OR
- PANEL 1: ***The Intersectionality of Energy, Socioeconomic Status, Race & Health***
 - o Yasmin Yacoby (Moderator), RI Office of Energy Resources
 - o Angela Ankoma, United Way of Rhode Island
 - o Ellen Tohn, Tohn Environmental Strategies
 - o Kevin Kennedy, Children's Mercy Kansas City
- PANEL 2: ***Opportunities for Improvement: Models and Solutions for the Future***
 - o Roberta Fagan (Moderator), Energy Marketers Association
 - o Ruth Ann Norton, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative
 - o Christopher Coll, NY State Energy Research and Development Authority
 - o Mark Kravatz, Habitat for Humanity Rhode Island
- CLOSING/CALL TO ACTION: Karen Verrengia, EERMC

Key Take-Aways:

- 1) **The problems are clear and understood.** The connections between energy, health and wealth are well-supported with data. Large disparities in resource allocation and an array of barriers to access disproportionately harm Communities of Color and marginalized communities.
- 2) **Solutions must look upstream** to address root causes, including systemic racism. Program planning must be based on systematic community engagement and community data analysis.
- 3) **Large investments are needed** and must be directed to disadvantaged communities. There are a growing number of case studies that demonstrate creative models, such as leveraging private capital. The COVID response provides evidence that large scale efforts are possible.

Feedback:

- 97 attendees; 27 survey responses
- Overall, how would you rate the content of the forum? (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)
 - o Average = 4.11 / Very Good
- How likely is it that you would recommend future EERMC events to a friend or colleague? (1 = would not recommend, 5 = would recommend)
 - o Average = 4.37 / Likely
- Positive Feedback
 - o Engaging speakers with a breadth of expertise
 - o Important, timely topics; Informative data
 - o Local, regional and national perspectives
- Areas for Improvement
 - o Focus more on creative solutions and targeted discussion
 - o Tighten up content for more clear, cohesive message
 - o Feature more speakers of color; Reach out to broader audience

URI PLUGGED INTO ENERGY RESEARCH LECTURE SERIES

The URI Plugged Into Energy Research (PIER) Lecture Series highlights cutting-edge energy research and outreach, and explores how the results may affect our daily lives in the future. The goal of the PIER lecture series is to increase literacy around energy topics of concern in Rhode Island and beyond. This year, the series focuses on the nexus between health outcomes, equity and energy efficiency. Speakers from across the U.S. will come together to share their knowledge around these important topics. More information can be found at <https://web.uri.edu/coopext/plugged-into-energy-research-lecture-series/>.

Lecture 1: Energy Efficiency, Human Health, and COVID-19

- Wednesday, October 7, 2020 @ 6:30-8:00pm
- Emma Pollack, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE)
- Dr. Bruce Tonn & Erin Rose, Three³ (ThreeCubed)
- Paul Francisco, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Lecture 2: Energy Efficiency in Schools: Safer Buildings, Healthier Students

- Wednesday, October 28, 2020 @ 6:30-8:00pm
- John Balfe, Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnership
- Joseph Allen, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
- Additional Speakers TBA

Lecture 3: Barriers to Energy Efficiency in Rental and Affordable Housing

- Wednesday, November 18, 2020 @ 6:30-8:00pm
- Speakers TBA – Suggestions welcome!

A follow-up memo to the EERMC will be provided upon the completion of these three lectures covering results and feedback at the December Council meeting.