

Virginia Consumers' Acceptance of Distributed Generation

Irene Leech JoAnn Emmel, Hannah McKnight, Richard Hirsh, Ralph Badinelli, Virgilio Centeno, Michael Gregg, Boonyarit Intiyot, Jaime de la Ree, Benjamin Sovacool, Tim Thacker, Fei (Fred) Wang

Abstract

Many Virginia consumers are not very informed about distributed generation as a possible source of electricity. However, they appear to think there would be some benefits to such a system. This multi-disciplinary project focuses on the security and efficiency of a distributed generation system. These are initial findings from the survey that explores consumer knowledge and attitudes toward distributed generation.

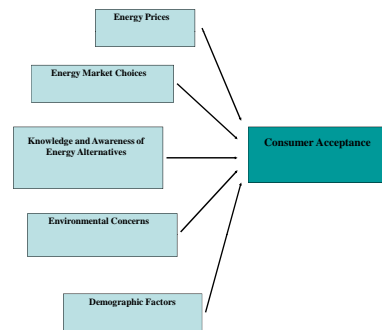


Methodology

- A telephone survey of 600 randomly selected adult Virginia consumers
- Conducted between September 20, 2006 and November 2, 2006
- Average call length was 7.7 minutes

Consumer Acceptance of DG Technologies

Consumer acceptance of DG Technologies may be influenced by several factors:



Some Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

- 40% male and 60% female
- 27% have a high school diploma or less; 17% attended or graduated from a technical or community college; and 44% earned a 4 year college diploma or more
- 39% have household income less than \$60,000; 52% have household income of \$60,000 or more; and 10% don't know or gave no answer

What is Distributed Generation?

- 32% of Virginians said they had "no idea"
- 9% said "Putting large equipment away from people"
- 28% knew it is "Putting small equipment near where electricity is needed"

What is Transmission?

- 11% of respondents did not know
- 4% thought it is plugging a cord into a wall
- 30% thought it is local power lines that come to your home
- 55% knew it is the power lines on towers that function like interstate highways

If every community or housing subdivision had its own electricity generation equipment...

- 61% of respondents strongly agree that "electricity would be more expensive for consumers"
- 62% agree that "fewer power lines would be needed"
- 46% agree that "there would be less pollution"
- 60% think "our energy supply would be less vulnerable to attack by terrorists"
- 52% think "this would be better than building more large nuclear, coal, or hydroelectric plants"