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New Report Explores Digital Platforms for Energy Consumers

Industry experts detail what consumers want most around digital platforms for energy usage and what might be coming next

ATLANTA and WASHINGTON – Dec. 11, 2018 – As electricity providers become more customer-centric, they are increasingly offering residential energy consumers digital tools that offer experiences similar to popular consumer-facing technologies in online retail, banking and other industries. A new report released today by the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC) and the Smart Electric Power Alliance (SEPA) looks at the current state of these digital platforms, including online marketplaces and energy usage data tools. The report, "Consumer Platform of the Future: Industry Insider Perspectives," also covers future trends industry experts see in this area and the key components that will make these solutions successful for end consumers.

The report was developed from 16 interviews with energy industry leaders – including electricity providers, technology vendors and consumer advocates – that were conducted as part of SECC's "Consumer Platform of the Future" research, which was published in January 2018. While the initial "Consumer Platform of the Future" report, which was based on a nationally representative consumer survey, primarily focused on consumer interest in digital energy platforms, the aim of the new report is to share knowledge and lessons learned with other industry leaders as they plan and implement their own consumer platforms.

As such, the report provides a cohesive, working definition of a consumer platform, explains how these tools are commonly structured and showcases how utilities are using them to more actively engage customers in their energy use. Industry experts also shared their perspectives on several features that contribute to making a digital customer engagement tool successful. The

most often cited features they said consumers want are easy-to-access and -understand information on options and recommendations and better control of their home energy usage.

The report also identifies several challenges utilities and solution providers face with wider adoption of digital customer engagement tools – such as working with existing regulatory rules and figuring out what it is that consumers want most – and offers several solutions and recommendations for each.

The full report is available to the media on request and to members of both organizations at www.smartenergycc.org and www.sepapower.org.