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Consumers Satisfied with Smart Home Devices, But Data Privacy Concerns Linger

Survey from the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative looks at reasons why consumers have – or have not – adopted smart home devices

ATLANTA – June 29, 2021 – A new report from the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative (SECC) found that current owners of smart home devices, such as smart thermostats, appliances and speakers, are overwhelmingly satisfied with these technologies; however, upfront costs and data privacy concerns remain key barriers for those who do not yet own any smart home devices.

The "Smart Home and Energy Data: What Do Consumers Want?" report – which is based on an online survey of 1,520 consumers in the U.S. and 500 in Canada – revealed that 97 percent of smart speaker and smart thermostat owners are either somewhat or very satisfied with their devices. According to the report, these current adopters skew younger (77 percent are under 55 years old) and align more closely with SECC's Tech-Savvy Protégé consumer segment, a group that values energy efficiency and environmental benefits and prefers using technologies to achieve them.

Among consumers that have not yet adopted smart home devices, the research found that these consumers are more likely to be older and fit into SECC's two consumers segments that are the least engaged in energy efficiency: the Movable Middle and the Energy Indifferent. These non-adopters state that they don't see a need for smart home devices (57 percent), that they have concerns around data privacy (45 percent) and that the upfront costs to purchase these devices are too high (39 percent).

Regardless of current device ownership, data security and privacy remain important concerns for all consumers. About two-thirds (63 percent) of all consumers are concerned about data leaks, with non-adopters of smart home devices being considerably more concerned with leaks originating from a third party rather than their current electricity provider. Smart home device owners appear to be equally trusting of third parties and their electricity providers; 44 percent are concerned with data leaks from both entities.

Finally, the survey revealed that current adopters are likely to have multiple smart home devices in their home, particularly those that have made the investment in smart appliances. Seventy

percent of smart appliance owners have a smart speaker, and 63 percent have a smart thermostat installed at home. Smart speaker owners, however, are the least likely to have other smart home devices; only 45 percent of them have a smart thermostat, and only 35 percent have smart appliances. At the same time, only 13 percent of smart speaker owners cite energy savings as a key benefit of these devices, suggesting that stakeholders have a major opportunity to help consumers understand how these devices can help them become more energy efficient at home.

The "Smart Home and Energy Data: What Do Consumers Want?" report can be downloaded by SECC members here and is available to the media on request. The research team will be hosting a free webinar on the report's main findings today at 1 p.m. (ET).

To learn more about the Smart Energy Consumer Collaborative, visit www.smartenergycc.org or follow us on LinkedIn.