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Data Access and Transparency: The Keys to Driving Innovation in the Electric Grid

In a new paper, technology and energy leaders put forth “guiding principles” for increased data sharing between industry stakeholders

Washington, D.C. — To foster innovation and realize the promise of a modern, reliable electric grid, industry stakeholders need transparent access to and exchange of relevant grid data. The underlying data associated with the grid must be standardized and made available to market participants.

That is the key takeaway from *Unlocking Grid Data*, a new paper that was released today by TechNet, the national, bipartisan network of innovation economy CEOs and senior executives; SunSpec Alliance, an industry alliance dedicated to developing and promoting energy information standards; and DBL Partners, a double bottom line venture capital firm.

The paper puts forth a set of guiding principles and detailed recommendations to advance the data access and transparency needed to increase innovation in grid design, planning, and customer engagement. Additionally, to foster competition and reduce costs, it explains why regulators should require the availability of holistic grid data developed from integrated planning processes in an open machine-readable standard data format.

“Increased data sharing between industry stakeholders is the most important step in modernizing our aging grid,” said Andrea Deveau, vice president of state policy and politics at TechNet. **“Without data transparency, new and innovative energy solutions are blocked out of the grid, precluding them from providing increased reliability, safety, affordability, and consumer choice. This paper provides a set of guiding principles that will promote the data access and transparency that is needed to drive innovation in the electric grid.”**

The paper outlines several foundational reasons to actively promote grid data transparency:

- Data transparency informs customer choice and economic development
- Data transparency supports industry innovation

- Data transparency enables accurate auditing of grid infrastructure investment
- Data transparency improves the safe and reliable operation of the electric grid

“When you examine widely adopted technologies, their success is often tied to standardization. From video formats, to electrical equipment, to the Internet itself, the establishment of standards has significantly reduced the cost and complexity of systems and enabled low-cost adoption at global scale,” said Tom Tansy, Chairman of the SunSpec Alliance. **“With standards, the energy industry can build upon the competitiveness it has attained, sustain profitability, increase innovation, and achieve economies of scale needed for widespread deployment of distributed energy resources.”**

The paper explains the need for data transparency and provides details on the specific grid data that should be transparent and accessible. Additionally, the paper addresses commonly raised concerns regarding grid data access, and provides potential approaches to addressing these issues.

“Today’s electrical grid is undergoing an unprecedented transformation, and it’s time to seize this opportunity to reform the grid in a way that maximizes customer choice, increases reliability, and maintains public safety,” said Nancy Pfund, Founder & Managing Partner at DBL Partners. **“To achieve this, it is vital that the underlying data associated with the grid be made available to industry stakeholders and market participants. This paper lays out a path forward so that grid data can be easily accessible and shared securely by market participants in a digital, machine-readable, and standardized format.”**

For a copy of the full paper, please go to www.sunspec.org.

About TechNet

TechNet is the national, bipartisan network of technology CEOs and senior executives that promotes the growth of the innovation economy by advocating a targeted policy agenda at the federal and 50-state level. TechNet’s diverse membership includes dynamic startups to the most iconic companies on the planet and represents more than two million employees in the fields of information technology, e-commerce, advanced energy, biotechnology, venture capital, and finance. TechNet has offices in Washington, D.C., Silicon Valley, San Francisco, Sacramento, Austin, Boston, Seattle, Albany, and Tallahassee.

About the SunSpec Alliance

The SunSpec Alliance is an industry alliance of developers, manufacturers, researchers, service providers, and utilities, together pursuing information and communications standards for the distributed energy industry. SunSpec standards address most operational aspects of distributed energy systems on the smart grid—including residential, commercial, and utility-scale systems—thus reducing cost, promoting innovation, and accelerating industry growth. More than 100 organizations are members and business partners of the SunSpec Alliance, including global leaders from Asia, Europe, and North America. Membership is open to corporations, non-profits, labs, governments and educational institutions. For more information about the SunSpec Alliance, or to download SunSpec specifications free of charge, please visit www.sunspec.org.

About DBL Partners

DBL Partners is a pioneer of double bottom line venture capital, a growing field of investing that seeks to optimize both financial return (First Bottom Line) and positive social impact, including social, environmental and regional economic benefits (Second Bottom Line). The firm focuses on sustainable energy, products and services, digital media and imaging, health care, and IT. The team has invested in a wide range of successful portfolio companies, including Pandora Media (NYSE:P), SolarCity (NASDAQ:SCTY), Tesla Motors (NASDAQ:TSLA), Revolution Foods, SpaceX and many others, which have created more than 45,000 jobs.

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