

TRIP REPORT: AMERICAN COUNCIL FOR AN ENERGY EFFICIENT ECONOMY (ACEEE), 2016 ENERGY EFFICIENCY FINANCE CONFERENCE

**MAY 22 – 24, 2016, NEWPORT RHODE ISLAND,
BY BRYAN BECKER**

The trip to the ACEEE Energy Efficiency Finance was fruitful both in terms of access to industry leaders, and deepening my understanding of the subject matter.

The conference kicked off with an opening reception on Sunday evening. By 1:30 PM on Monday, the first full day of the conference I had had:

- Dinner with Deana Carrillo, Executive Director of the California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority (CAEATFA)
- Made contact with Alex Hill and Jérôme Bilodeau of Dunsky Energy Consultants of Montreal.
- Attended the opening plenary, “The Green Bank Movement: Public-Private Partnerships to Accelerate Energy Efficiency”
- A very productive meeting with Jeff Shrub of the Coalition for Green Capital
- Lunch with Bryan Garcia (CEO of the Connecticut Green Bank) and Alfred Griffin (President of the New York Green Bank)

The Dunsky consultants were great. I had met Jérôme previously in Ottawa and communicated extensively with Alex by email and phone but had never met him. These guys are rock stars in the world of energy efficiency finance. They have consulted to most of the American green-bank-like institutions. Most recently they were principal consultants of the conversion of the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank from a traditional infrastructure bank to a green bank. They seemed to know everyone at the conference and went out of their way to introduce me to everybody.

I also have to say that I was amazed at the state of energy efficiency finance in the US. My main observations:

- The sector is very diverse and wide-ranging and includes large scale commercial energy efficiency to small scale municipal and residential projects
- There is a high level of cooperation between the publicly held utilities and the public sector, although this relationship is not without its tensions
- There is a high level of citizen engagement in energy efficiency and alternative energy initiatives in states where energy is expensive. The geographic focus of this activity would be in the northeastern states and California.

- Although energy efficiency is a multi-billion-dollar industry, there is a sincere concern about “energy poverty” amongst low median income (LMI) households
- The green bank movement is alive and well in the US, and is an integral part of energy efficiency sector.

The breakout sessions were packed with information and insight. There were five basic tracks:

- Commercial
- Multi-family
- Residential
- MUSH (Municipalities, Universities, Schools, and Hospitals)
- Green Banks and Green Bonds

My focus was on Commercial, Residential, and Green Banks and Bonds. However, I was often conflicted as to which session to attend as there were times when two or three interesting sessions occurred simultaneously.

One of my favorite sessions was “Innovative Pathways to a Green Bank” which featured some small scale initiatives that I would describe as “micro green banks”. I am going to write a short article on this in the not too distant future as it showcases some great “thinking outside the box”.

The next conference I am attending on behalf of CC4GF is the **Alberta and Saskatchewan Renewable Energy Finance Summit**, June 2nd and 3rd in Calgary.