

# Identification of Barriers to Energy Efficiency and Solutions to Promote These Practices

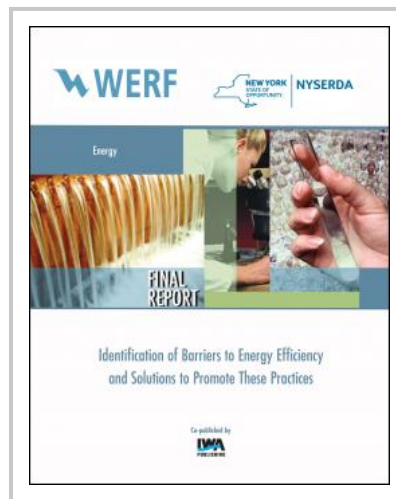
Successful deployment of energy efficiency initiatives may be increased by recognizing barriers and advancing strategies that overcome them. A national survey recently collected input on barriers from more than 110 wastewater service utilities. A concurrent utility focus group process captured detailed experiences. Motivation is a crucial precondition for energy efficiency. The utilities reported that the strongest motivators for utility staff are reductions in energy expenditures and prioritization by utility management.

The project identified the following key barriers:

- Capital projects. Economic barriers dominate: inadequate financial feasibility, lack of funding, and resource competition with other organizational priorities.
- Operations optimization. Operational conservatism (desire for a margin of safety for permit compliance) is the strongest barrier to implementing operating changes that conserve energy.
- Maintenance for energy efficiency. Many utilities have not optimized maintenance intervals for energy efficiency because they prioritize more pressing maintenance activities.

The barriers considered by this research include both internal and external challenges. Internal challenges are mitigated by well-developed energy programs, as gauged by the level of implementation of the approaches outlined in the WEF Energy Roadmap. Utilities with well-developed programs perceive barriers as being lower. External challenges are reduced for water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) in states with well-funded and accessible energy incentive programs and less-inhibitive energy policies.

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