



Five Ways to WIN \$100 As a Wisconsin Meter Watch Participant

- Improve your skills and achieve the biggest percentage reduction in electricity use for the month of May, 2018 compared to May, 2017 of all participating WI Meter Watch trackers.
- Achieve the largest kWh reduction in electricity use for the month of May, 2018 compared to May, 2017 of all qualifying trackers.
- Share a success story about teaching someone significantly younger or older than you about ways to conserve electricity.
- By October 1, 2017 enlist another WI household with high electricity use based on the May 2017 kWh consumption to join the WI Meter Watch and track their use for at least 6, continuous months. The person who *enlists* another qualifying household with the highest May 2017 usage wins this prize.
- Discover and share an innovative, effective, no-cost electricity saving trick that never occurred to you before.

Contest rules: Participants must track monthly electricity use with a Wisconsin Meter Watch sheet from June 2017 to May 2018. SOUL board members will review written submissions and make awards. Maximum, one award per household. Contact SOUL at info@soulwisconsin.org or 608-625-4949 with questions about the contest or how to use of the tracking spreadsheet.

TO GET YOUR FREE ONLINE TRACKING SHEET

EMAIL : Info@SoulWisconsin.org

Significant Savings & CO2 Reductions Start at Home NOT on the Grid

It is understandable that many people are hopeful that large scale technology expansions and top-down policy changes can address increasing energy costs, environmental degradation and climate change, but how do-able and affordable are these “automatic,” fixes? As most households waste about half of the power they purchase, what would happen if even a small percentage the trillions of dollars utilities want from us shape the future were to flow to improvements into bettering our habits and our homes? But,..why wait for any “top-down” solutions when most household can cut their use 13% simply by looking at their electric bills and tracking use. The environmental benefit of this simple act is equal to installing 3, 310 watt solar panels and it does not cost anything.

According to 2014 World Energy Council data, the CO2 footprints of the industrial and commercial sectors in the U.S. are on par with other countries. Our world-leading per capita CO2 binge rests squarely on us, the residential sector.

Here are some useful facts to start your journey: Average Wisconsin households consume 700 kWh of electricity, 70 therms of natural gas and 43 gallons of gasoline per month. Respectively, these uses account for 19%, 13% and 22% of the average household CO2 footprint with food, products and services making up the remaining 46%. About 80% of grid power is fossil-fuel generated and only is 7% renewable. Therefore, CO2 reduction is both maximized and guaranteed when we reduce home use but is highly inefficient when we try to fix the problem by expanding the role of the electric grid.

Understanding these two, very different, spending paths is critical if we want to make progress is reducing CO2. In Wisconsin, electric customers are already contracted by the WI PSC to pay more than \$400 million a year over the next 30 years for previously approved expansion transmission lines. Utilities are pushing for at least ten more lines in the state. Utilities do not guarantee any CO2 emission reductions with these lines. The long-term, high-interest, debt on the even lines we have added since 2006 are largely responsible for our region-leading electricity rates and high facility fees.

Doubling this \$400 million per year charge would not lower electric bills or drop emissions and would cost twice as much as the best funded energy efficiency programs in the U.S.! Already, Wisconsinites spend 8 times as much on transmission expansion as we do on energy efficiency and developing local renewables such as home and community solar.

SOUL's *Wisconsin Meter Watch* has proven that average households can cut their CO2 footprints 30% using conservation tips and no more than \$50 in minor improvements. This change is equivalent to installing cutting CO2 emissions equivalent to installing 8 solar panels.

The Power of Meter Watching with No & Low Cost Steps

- Read and record monthly usage using the WI Meter Watch tracking sheet or your own notes. Compare your monthly use to WI average to discover what works and to build-upon good habits. Share what you learn with family and friends! Email info@soulwisconsin.org to get your free, online electricity use tracking tools.
- Install modern, 1.5 gallon per minute shower heads; set hot water tank to 110 degrees or for comfortable bathing using only hot water rather than blend in cold water. Hot water makes up 30% of natural gas use, most of which comes from fracking.
- Change all lightbulbs to LED type as they require replacing. Only 2% of households have done this.

- Place your entire home entertainment center with cable box, tv set and other accessories on a timer that shuts-off everything after 3 or 6 hours of use. Timers work well with fans, pumps, coffee percolators, crock pots, engine block heaters and more.
- Use conservation modes on refrigerator, clothes and dish washers. Vacuum dust around compressor coils and check rubber seals on freezer and fridge.
- Next steps: Line dry clothes. In summer, open windows and cool off house at night. Close windows and blinds during the day, In winter, wear a sweater and set thermostat 3-5 degrees cooler at night. Save up for more efficient appliances, an electric car and solar in that order. Prolonging the lifespan of utility substations with community solar will make solar very affordable in coming years.

How Do-able is 100% Renewable Energy?

It would be very costly and reducing energy use is crucial to getting there. If Wisconsin electric customers were enabled by state lawmakers to shift \$4 per month of our current energy spending into energy efficiency rebate pools to help families steadily chisel away at 50% waste, a city the size of Madison could meet remaining electricity needs with about 15 square miles of solar panels and storage. The cost to achieve this, state-wide, would be a whopping third of a trillion dollars, but these costs are about the same as utility expansion planning that *hypothesize* a 30% reduction in CO2 emissions. Your household can easily beat this goal without a single law or policy change and you can start right now.

