



An Introduction to Near Zero

Near Zero is a nonprofit that aims to increase the frequency and value of dialogue among energy experts and to make this expertise more accessible to those who make and influence energy-related decisions in government, business, and NGOs. Decision makers lack credible, impartial and timely sources of information reflecting the range of expert opinion. What do the best experts agree on? When they disagree, what is the source and extent of the disagreement? Working with decision makers and influentials to identify critical energy issues, Near Zero will initiate, moderate and synthesize transparent online discussions among the foremost experts from industry and academia. The result will be a rich, digital cache of actionable information to guide policy and investment decisions.

The Problem

In conversations with congressional staffers, journalists, scientists, NGOs, and philanthropists there is widespread agreement about the problem: critical energy- and climate-related policy and investment decisions are too often made based on confused or incorrect information. This is neither the fault of decision makers nor subject experts. The technologies involved are complex and multi-dimensional. There are significant differences of opinion and uncertainty among experts about what to do. Where agreement exists, it isn't exposed. Compounding the problem is a communications and market disconnect between the experts designing and developing the analysis, and the decision makers consuming the information.

Our Solution

Near Zero will identify and host a community made up of scientists and technologists with deep expertise in energy, as well as decision makers who direct public and private investments in energy and climate solutions, from long-term research to commercialization and deployment of specific technologies. Near Zero will identify topics and questions that are relevant to the real issues facing decision makers and to real developments in expert understanding. Near Zero will then prompt and actively moderate discussions among the most qualified energy experts. The goal of these discussions will be to isolate points of agreement and disagreement among experts, characterize the sources and range of disagreement and uncertainty using innovative online tools to elicit quantitative expert judgments, and identify areas for further research that could reduce this uncertainty. These expert discussions and a Near Zero summary will then be made freely and publicly available on our website, nearzero.org.

Who's Behind It

The Near Zero coordinating team is made up of three scientists and three technologists from the software industry. Ken Caldeira and Steven Davis research climate, carbon and energy at the [Carnegie Institution's Department of Global Ecology](#) and David Keith works at the interface of climate science, energy technology and public policy at the [University of Calgary's Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering](#). Karen Fries, Jabe Blumenthal and Brian Arbogast are all former employees of Microsoft Corporation, where their careers included research, development, design and management. Two philanthropists have provided start-up funding for the project.

For more info, please contact info@nearzero.org

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