

## **Voluntary Green Electricity Purchasing: A Comparative Study of North American Non-profit Organizations**

Factors that influence businesses to take voluntarily environmental actions include internal environmental structures, green organizational cultures/values, and environmental champions. But what about non-profit organizations, which are guided by different internal environmental values and decision-making processes, and influenced by different external stakeholders? Given that many non-profit organizations highlight their vision and value statements of social and environmental goals as important drivers of their activities, this study examines one measurable action, the purchase of green electricity, and relates its impact on carbon emissions to the factors promoting or restricting these purchases. The role of environmental champions and the techniques they employ to influence the adoption of a voluntary environmental initiative are evaluated and compared between different types of non-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations that purchase green electricity include religious institutions, community health centers, co-ops, environmental societies, youth and low-income development agencies and shelters. Direct comparisons are made to test for differences in green electricity purchasing trends over time (e.g. number of organizations purchasing each year, size of annual green electricity purchase, and proportion of total electricity demand that is green electricity). A sample of North American non-profit organizations that purchase green electricity (n = 50) is compared to a sample of environmental service organizations (n = 20) that do not, to gain an understanding of the decision-making process involved in choosing among competing internal energy management options (e.g. energy efficiency, conservation, on-site generation, or green electricity purchasing).

For more information on this research project contact:

Travis Gliedt  
Doctoral Candidate  
Geography and Environmental Management  
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1  
[t2gliedt@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:t2gliedt@uwaterloo.ca)

Paul Parker  
Professor  
Geography and Environmental Management  
University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1  
(519) 888-4567 x32791  
[pparker@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pparker@uwaterloo.ca)