

Energy Demand Response Programs and Patent Exposure

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The core business model of energy producers and providers does not traditionally create significant patent litigation risk. Despite the complexity of the modern energy grid, the basic business and technology of energy generation have not changed significantly in the past 100 years. However, new programs, including residential demand response, executed via smart home appliances and controls, may expose utility companies to increased liability. Demand response programs allow utility providers to reduce grid load and energy pricing by offering customers pricing incentives to reduce energy usage during times of peak demand. Specifically, energy providers respond to increasing peak demand either by creating excess capacity – by building more plants and transmission infrastructure, or by reducing demand – also known as “peak shaving.” If one of these two options is not followed, the inaction in the face of rising demand can create blackouts and brownouts.

In this article published in *IPWatchdog*, Greg Len and Dustin Ferzacca discuss energy demand response programs and patent exposure.

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