AN OPEN LETTER TO RESNET AND THE HERS® COMMUNITY

The Rater Overhead Impact Index (ROII)

A Framework for Professionalizing the HERS® Industry's Value Chain

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Executive Summary

The HERS® industry is scaling. In 2024, RESNET professionals rated 436,798 homes, continuing the industry's record growth, and the organization's stated goal is one million ratings annually by the end of 2028.[1] Reaching that goal requires a workforce that is growing, not shrinking. It requires raters who can sustain their businesses, invest in their equipment, and stay in the profession long enough to train the next generation.

New RESNET standards, addenda, and program revisions can add operational time and cost to the field professional's workload. These additions may be necessary for building science. But they are not consistently measured, and because they are unmeasured, they can be invisible to the market, difficult to recover in rater fees, and unaccounted for in the standards development process itself.

This white paper proposes the Rater Overhead Impact Index (ROII): a standardized metric to be published alongside each significant RESNET standard change. The ROII quantifies the operational delta, the additional time and direct expense, so that the work required for implementation is accounted for in the industry's value chain.

The ROII does not slow progress. It professionalizes it. When stakeholders understand the resources required for implementation, they can plan staffing, training, schedules, budgets, and effective dates with fewer surprises.

The Requested Action

We ask RESNET to authorize a limited pilot applying the ROII methodology to the next two qualifying standards changes, publish the assumptions and results for stakeholder review, and use the findings to determine whether a permanent implementation-impact process is warranted.

The Transparency Gap in Technical Evolution

Building science does not happen in a vacuum. It happens in the field, on ladders, and behind keyboards. When a new standard is introduced, implementation-cost discussions often focus on the builder's materials, such as moving from fiberglass to spray foam or adding a ventilation system. The operational delta on the other side of the transaction also deserves to be calculated:

- Additional field time for new testing protocols and verification procedures
- Expanded administrative requirements for photo documentation, QA submissions, and record keeping
- Capital investment in new or upgraded equipment, software, and calibration
- Heightened QAD auditing time driven by evolving compliance requirements

A single change may appear modest. But the cumulative effect of HVAC 310 grading, enhanced quality-control protocols, expanded photo requirements, and new ventilation addenda can create a compounding operational delta that goes unmeasured. Without a metric, raters lack a consistent professional language for communicating this value to builder clients. The ROII closes that gap.

The ROII Scorecard

We propose that each significant RESNET amendment, standard update, or major program change include a published ROII Scorecard with the following components:

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION	UNIT
ΔTf **Field Time Delta**	Estimated additional hours per home for onsite testing, verification, and photo documentation	Hours per home
ΔTa **Admin/QA Delta**	Estimated additional hours for data entry, QA submission, report preparation, and record keeping	Hours per home
L **Licensing/Hardware**	Amortized cost of new equipment, software licenses, calibration, training, or consumables required by the change	Dollars per home

The Formula

$$\mathrm{ROII} = (\Delta Tf + \Delta Ta) \times \text{Avg. Loaded Labor Rate} + L$$

Result: Estimated implementation impact per affected rating. **L** includes only incremental, change-specific expenses that are not already captured in the company's loaded labor rate.

The time and resource inputs are the proposed public output. The dollar calculation below is only an illustrative planning example. Each company would apply its own confidential costs independently; company-specific calculations would not be collected, compared, recommended, or published.

ΔTf Added field time per home

Rate The rating company's own loaded labor rate

ΔTa Added administrative and QA time per home

L Per-home share of added equipment, software, calibration, training, and consumable costs

The loaded labor rate reflects the rater's true cost of doing business: vehicle, insurance, software subscriptions, benefits, and professional development. For the worked example below, an illustrative $80-per-hour assumption is used. It is not a fee, pricing recommendation, or market benchmark.

Independent business judgment: ROII work would not collect, compare, recommend, or publish participant fees, billing rates, bids, discounts, margins, customer terms, pricing plans, market intentions, wages, or company-specific financial information. Every business would continue to make commercial and pricing decisions independently.

Hypothetical Example: A Ventilation Addendum

The following scenario illustrates how a typical standard change would be scored using the ROII. It is not tied to a specific addendum but reflects a plausible field scenario.

COMPONENT	VALUE	IMPACT
ΔTf — Extra field time (testing + photos)	+0.25 hrs (15 min)	$20.00
ΔTa — Extra admin time (reporting + QA prep)	+0.15 hrs (9 min)	$12.00
Company-specific loaded labor rate (illustrative input)	$80/hr	—
L — Equipment/consumables (amortized)	$12.00	$12.00
Illustrative company impact		**$44.00 per home**

At scale: If the change applied to all 800 annual ratings and the assumptions above held, the estimated annual impact would be $35,200. The ROII makes that value visible while leaving every business's commercial and pricing decisions independent.

Why the ROII Strengthens RESNET

1. It Protects the HERS® Brand

RESNET does not set rater fees, but it does set the scope of work. If scope increases without market clarity on the cost of that scope, rating companies may face pressure on staffing, scheduling, and quality control. The ROII gives RESNET a way to demonstrate that it measures the cost of maintaining its standards and builds that transparency into the process.

2. It Supports the Path to One Million Ratings

RESNET's goal of one million annual ratings by the end of 2028 requires a workforce that is growing. That means new raters entering the profession and experienced raters staying in it. The ROII helps raters build sustainable businesses by giving them a professional framework to communicate the value of their work, not as a complaint, but as market data.

3. It Creates Market Clarity

The ROII is not a price mandate. It is a transparency instrument. It does not tell anyone what to charge. It tells stakeholders the resources a change may require for professional delivery. Builders deserve to understand the implementation demands behind the certifications they are purchasing. Raters deserve to understand the implementation demands behind the standards they are implementing. The ROII provides both.

4. It Supports Better Implementation Planning

Documenting implementation resources gives rating firms, builders, providers, and RESNET a shared planning reference. Each organization would remain responsible for its own staffing, budgeting, purchasing, and pricing decisions.

How the ROII Would Work in Practice

RESNET could establish a balanced ROII working group that includes field raters, QADs, rating providers, builders, program representatives, and RESNET standards staff across multiple climates and market types.

Beta Testing: Before a significant standard or addendum is finalized, ROII committee members could perform field tests to estimate the time and cost requirements of the proposed change.

Publication: The ROII Scorecard could be published alongside the standard itself, on the same page and in the same announcement. It would not be buried in an appendix or released after the fact.

Annual Cumulative Report: RESNET could publish an annual ROII Summary showing the cumulative operational delta of changes issued in that calendar year. This would give raters, providers, builders, and RESNET leadership a shared picture of the year's impact.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this an attempt to slow down progress in building science?

The opposite. The ROII is designed to accelerate adoption by ensuring that the professionals delivering new standards can afford to implement them well. Progress works best when the people implementing it have the time, tools, and training to do it properly.

RESNET doesn't set rater fees. Why should it publish cost data?

RESNET sets the scope of work. The ROII simply makes the implementation cost of that scope visible. It would not prescribe fees; each company would use the information and its own costs to make independent business decisions.

How will the ROII be calculated?

By the balanced ROII working group using structured field testing and documented assumptions before release.

Will this make HERS ratings more expensive for builders?

It could affect pricing, but the ROII would not prescribe fees. It would give builders and rating companies a transparent estimate of implementation cost so each business can make its own pricing and purchasing decisions.

Doesn't publishing overhead data create resistance to new standards?

Transparency is not resistance. If a proposed change has a high ROII, the Standards Development Committee can evaluate whether the same goal can be achieved more efficiently. That supports better-informed implementation.

What if I choose to absorb the overhead to stay competitive?

That is your business decision. The ROII helps ensure you are making it with full information and that the value you are contributing is documented rather than invisible.

Join Us

We are building a coalition of HERS® raters, RFIs, QADs, and providers who believe that the most transparent and professionalized inspection workforce in the country starts with measuring the work we actually do. Our goal is to present the ROII to RESNET leadership with strong industry support behind it.

Here is how you can help:

1. Read this paper and decide if the formula reflects your reality in the field.
2. Reply with your feedback. Does the ROII capture the operational delta you are experiencing? What would you change?
3. Send us your examples. Which standard rollout, addendum, or program change added field time, administration, training, calibration, equipment, or consumables?
4. Add your name as a supporter. The more professionals standing behind this, the stronger the case.

October 30, 2026 is the supporter deadline. Verified support received by then will accompany the letter when it is delivered to RESNET Executive Director Shelby Gatlin and RESNET Board leadership. Names, states, and credentials will be included only with the supporter's permission.

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Sources

1. RESNET, "Number of Homes HERS® Rated in the U.S. in 2024 Tops 400,000 Mark." The article reports 436,798 ratings in 2024 and RESNET's goal of one million annual ratings by the end of 2028. Read the RESNET article.

2. RESNET Antitrust Policy. Read the policy.