

DOCKETED	
Docket Number:	25-EPIC-01
Project Title:	Electric Program Investment Charge 2026–2030 Investment Plan (EPIC 5)
TN #:	270813
Document Title:	Arun S.K. Raju Comments - Programs that support early-stage clean energy startups
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Arun S.K. Raju
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	6/18/2026 11:50:46 AM
Docketed Date:	6/18/2026

Comment Received From: Arun S.K. Raju
Submitted On: 6/18/2026
Docket Number: 25-EPIC-01

Programs that support early-stage clean energy startups

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



Commission Staff
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

June 18, 2026

RE: EPIC 5 Investment Plan (2026-2030)

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Arun S.K. Raju and I am a Research Faculty member at the Center for Environmental Research and Technology (CE-CERT) at the University of California, Riverside (UCR). I also hold an administrative appointment as CE-CERT's Associate Director for Operations. My responsibilities include stakeholder and community engagement and long-term strategy development. Established in 1992 and now operating as the largest research center at UCR, CE-CERT brings together multiple disciplines to address society's most pressing challenges in air quality, climate change, energy, and transportation.

The Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC) program has played a critical role in supporting clean energy research and technology innovation in the State and has resulted in significant benefits to ratepayers and the general public. I am writing on behalf of CE-CERT to support the continuation of key programs that support early-stage clean energy startups that are developing novel technologies that can help reduce greenhouse gas, criteria pollutant, and air toxics emissions and accelerate decarbonization across different sectors.

Specifically, I am writing to support the following programs:

- CalTestBed
- Regional Energy Innovation Clusters (REICs)
- CalSEED

UC Riverside is one of the authorized CalTestBed facilities, and CE-CERT has conducted dozens of technology evaluation/demonstration projects through the CalTestBed program that directly contribute towards the EPIC 5 Strategic Objectives. These projects are a critical step in validating and optimizing early-stage technologies and accelerating the commercialization process. UCR is also part of Cleantech San Diego's Southern California Energy Innovation Network (SCEIN) program and has provided technology and commercialization support to several clean energy startups. The REIC model has shown a proven return on investment, with SCEIN alone generating an 80:1 return on the



CEC investment through follow-on funding. The CalSEED program has been crucial in providing funding to support very early-stage companies developing novel technologies, including through collaboration with academia.

These programs together have helped the validation, demonstration, optimization, and deployment of state-of-the-art clean energy technologies under real world conditions at CE-CERT and elsewhere. These programs have facilitated collaboration across industry, academia, and other stakeholder groups to help move these technologies towards commercial deployment. We strongly urge the Commission to continue these programs.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Arun S.K. Raju".

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