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Circular economy for EV batteries and support for REICs

Under the topic initiative of: Strengthening critical materials supply chains for clean energy technologies, I would like to bring attention to a growing domestic feedstock: aged electric vehicle (EV) batteries.

As Cofounder and CFO of ReJoule, I have been at the forefront of seeing the impacts of the lack of infrastructure and resources to efficiently collect and repair, remanufacture and repurpose EV batteries. While ICE vehicles and their components have an established supply chain to recoup as much value from end-of-life vehicles as possible, the same does not yet exist for EVs. Transportation costs are high as batteries can be considered hazardous. Most salvage yards are small family-run businesses that do not have the financial and human resources to handle and ship these batteries to be remanufactured or repurposed.

Even larger corporations chose to recycle as the investment to set up facilities and staff to keep these batteries in circulation is very high. Funding to boost this ecosystem can help with this market fragmentation and pool resources. I have been in contact with Rebuilders Automotive Supply Circulate (<https://rascirculate.com/>) on this very topic as they have a network of salvage yards across the country. I'd be happy to coordinate a call to share more information on the challenges we are seeing and how funding support can help.

On support for REICs:

In its proposed decision, the CPUC made it clear that the CEC can continue to invest in programs that support entrepreneurs. The CPUC stated:

The CEC may propose an entrepreneur strategy in its Strategic Initiatives and Research Topic Areas in achievement of the five EPIC Goals and 13 Strategic Objectives. I encourage the CEC to expand its incubator focus beyond just grid tech, instead focusing on technologies that address all of EPIC 5 goals and objectives.

We are a startup that has directly benefited from many regional energy innovation clusters or REICs - like SCEIN and LACI. REICs have helped us navigate the myriad of funding programs available that helped us bring our innovation from the R&D stage into the market to create a more efficient and thriving circular economy.

Furthermore, ReJoule has been directly impacted as federal support for clean energy faces uncertainty. It is more important than ever that California continues its nationwide leadership in energy innovation by sustaining investment in the proven, regional programs that deliver real economic and environmental results.