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DBL Partners public comments on the Climate Innovation Program

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

DBL Partners is a Bay Area-based impact venture capital firm dedicated to building and scaling companies that achieve positive environmental, social, and economic outcomes alongside top-tier financial returns. In our almost 20 year history, we are proud to have played a role in establishing California's leadership in climate technology innovation and market building. DBL is also proud of our long work history with the CEC, including facilitating public-private knowledge sharing and working to support cutting edge clean energy and climate technology research, development, and deployment in the state. We are very excited to see the CEC's Climate Innovation Program (CIP) emerge and look forward to supporting its success. CIP will play a timely, critical role in accelerating the advancement of key technologies needed to meet California's ambitious clean energy and climate goals, including driving progress on decarbonization and climate resilience.

Priority Technology Topics:

DBL Partners encourages the CEC to be expansive regarding priority technology topics. As a venture capital firm, some of the highest impact, most exciting decarbonization and climate resilience innovation we are seeing reaches beyond the traditional buckets of technology focus and problem solutions. We are excited to see wildfire prevention technology as one of the CEC's priority topics. Wildfires harm the resilience of California communities by causing loss of life and property and damaging local ecosystems and water systems, jeopardize the reliability and resiliency of our grid, and threaten our greatest nature-based decarbonization assets: trees. A University of Chicago [study](#) found that the 2020 fires alone wiped out over 15 years of carbon reduction progress in California. Despite the risks of wildfires and the importance of forests for carbon capture and sequestration and ecosystem protection – including biodiversity habitat, water quantity and quality, mudslide prevention, and recreation opportunities for mental health, physical health, and economic development – there has been limited support for innovation and R&D programs through public grant programs. For these reasons, we strongly advocate for both wildfire mitigation *and* recovery technology as one of the Climate Innovation Program's top funding priorities.

We also encourage the CEC to prioritize building decarbonization, again with an expansive view of eligible technologies and solutions. Fossil-fuel combustion attributed to residential and commercial buildings accounts for roughly [29 percent](#) of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions. While both state and federal incentives exist for residential and commercial decarbonization efforts such as heat pumps and rooftop solar, there has been limited support for solutions that electrify and increase the energy efficiency of commercial services and operational expenditures within those buildings. This can include everything from cleaning and disinfection technologies that replace the use of carbon-intensive chemicals, everyday appliances (such as computer monitors), and food production, which currently have substantial energy requirements in nearly every building across the state. Decarbonized innovations addressing these challenges are being developed and would benefit substantially from prioritization in the Climate Innovation Program.

Eligibility Considerations - Company Maturity:

We recommend that program eligibility include companies at multiple stages of maturity. Some climate innovation companies are in the true research and development or pilot stages of solution development, while some are a little further along that have attracted venture support from funds that are willing to take risk, but additional public support would be a significant catalyst towards demonstration, further technology development, attracting additional private capital investment, commercialization, and scaling to achieve widespread impact. This is especially true in the current macroeconomic environment, where even climate solutions companies that have successfully raised

private funds in the past face many more barriers now in securing support to refine, deploy, and scale technologies.

For these reasons, we encourage the CEC to include the earliest stage venture-backed climate companies, which have been slightly too mature for previous State of California grants programs such as the SEED Initiative. We also encourage the eligibility of climate solutions companies that are slightly more mature and with a few successful funding rounds but, with grant funding, could develop a new product or accelerate deployment of technologies that would solve a specific energy efficiency or decarbonization challenges for the State of California.

DBL Partners and its portfolio companies would be happy to provide more information on the subsectors of wildfire mitigation and recovery, building decarbonization and electrification, and energy efficient technologies as well as the benefits of taking an expansive view on eligible company stages.