

DOCKETED

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Written Comments: Working with California's Private Sector: Increasing Participation for Research Grant Funding

Attached are the written comments I spoke from during the panel: Working with California's Private Sector: Increasing Participation for Research Grant Funding.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

**Working with California's Private Sector: Increasing Participation for
Research Grant Funding**

Comments by Jason Anderson, President and CEO, Cleantech San Diego

Thursday, September 22, 2016

10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

1516 Ninth Street, First Floor Charles Imbrecht Hearing Room

Sacramento, California

**What are some concerns and challenges facing the private sector,
including small businesses and entrepreneurs, when considering
applying for grant funding opportunities?**

Application Process

1. Time consuming and costly for small companies – don't have internal resources to adequately apply
2. Deadlines often change
3. Applications are not always accepted online and can be costly to produce and deliver to the CEC
4. Challenging to meet required 'academic publication' requirements/30+ years of experience doesn't count.
5. The application process is set up to reward those who can get the right style, font, page count, and binding and fail those that don't meet these thresholds even if the content is brilliant.

Information Required in Application

1. Rate payer benefit analysis is incredibly difficult to project
 - a. CEC expects applicants to look into the future and speculate on the success of the project, perform a detailed ratepayer benefits analysis of the futuristic outcome, and then prove how you will perform those ill defined benefits
 - b. And it is worth 20 points!
 - c. CEC should identify existing high scoring examples and share with potential applicant
2. Information requested is often repetitive
3. Matching requirements are a significant challenge as are in-kind requirements

Terms and Conditions/IP

1. If exceptions are taken to the CEC Terms and Conditions, the proposal is dismissed as non-compliant. The Private sector often cannot accept risks associated with the T&Cs.
2. CEC grants come with IP Provisions that are concerning to the private sector and entrepreneurs and discourage them from applying:
 - a. Currently they are required to sign documents that give the PUC and CPUC the right to license the IP to the IOUs.
 - b. They are also required to sign documents that include a 10 year, 1.5% royalty provision

Post Award

1. The CEC project management requirements and reporting requirements can be tedious for fast moving startups and entrepreneurs.

How can the California Energy Commission better increase awareness of the research programs to California private sector companies?

1. Set up discussions across the private sector to share pending research programs prior to the release of those programs to gain insight into issue; potential technologies to resolve problem; independent discussions regarding research program

What are some ideas to encourage private sector companies to apply for research funding?

1. Conduct more in-depth workshops at the release of each GFO. Provide greater detail along with better direction and instruction
2. Encourage Universities and other to partner with private sector companies and entrepreneurs as a sub contractor – and not a prime
 - a. Allows for company to access University resources
 - b. UCSD is now subcontracting to small businesses (4 currently) to aid in closing the application gap
3. To the extent possible, certain GFO's should be issued in a timeframe strategic to the issuance of relevant federal agency SBIR Solicitations.

Besides grant funding, what else can the Energy Commission do to help California private sector companies to be successful?

1. Understand the latest technologies being developed in CA backyard; investments being made in CA (i.e., GE Software Center of Excellence – San Ramon = 2K people employed over last 5 yrs).
2. Invite the private sector to share latest technology developments – strictly technical discussion
3. Provide funding in smaller amounts to support smaller pilot projects – not everything should be \$1M plus.
4. CEC could create a fund, (\$1-5M), whose job it is to incubate/fund small proof of concept projects that support sustainability, climate, security, resiliency initiatives. The funding per project would be small, but would also require much less overhead to manage, administer and report against. It could be structured as an open-solicitation or on some quarterly basis, and that funding notification would be within 90 days, and the expectation is that the funded project would be completed within the next 90 days. The net result being dozens of smart interesting technology demonstrations, and also getting the entrepreneurs a little bit of funding to get ideas “off the bench” and into Field Trials.