



CAREER LADDERS PROJECT

March 25, 2011

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10-ALT-01
DATE <u>3-25-11</u>
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TO: California Energy Commissio
Dockets Orrice, MS-4

RE: Docket Number 10-ALT-1
Advisory Committee Meeting of Monday, March 7, 2011
Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program
Testimony regarding the 2011-2012 Investment Plan

Attached please find a paper copy of testimony regarding Docket Number 10-ALP-1 concerning the 2011-2012 Investment Plan delivered orally to the Advisory Committee Meeting of the Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program via the webinar on Monday March 7, 2011.

We are submitting this for the record in written format as well.

Sincerely,

Linda Collins
Executive Director
Career Ladders Project

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**Advisory Committee Meeting
Alternative and Renewable Fuel and Vehicle Technology Program
Docket Number 10-ALT-1
Monday, March 7, 2011
Testimony regarding the 2011-2012 Investment Plan**

I am Linda Collins, Executive Director of the Career Ladders Project for California Community Colleges. We work statewide to foster educational and career advancement for Californians – through research, policy initiatives and direct support to community colleges and their workforce partners. We operate under the auspices of the Foundation for California Community Colleges, the non-profit auxiliary to the community college system.

We want to commend the Commission staff for their recommendation to continue to invest in workforce development and training as a critical element of the 2011-12 investment plan. Addressing the skills needs and gaps articulated by employers is clearly critical if we are to develop the clean transportation energy market.

We are especially pleased to see that the plan includes attention to identifying programs that can develop career ladders for new entrants to the industry. We believe attention to new entrants—as well as to continuing training and pathways to advancement for those already working in the industry—is critical if we are to build a healthy, green economy and system for the future.

We would like to let you know about one such large-scale initiative currently being funded by the California Community Colleges, the Career Advancement Academy (or CAA) demonstration project. CAAs are designed to establish pipelines to careers and additional higher education opportunities for underemployed young adults from low-income and historically underserved communities. The CAAs address foundational skills in reading, writing, and mathematics while enrolling students in career technical training programs that lead to high skill careers, and/or additional education. All CAAs build on partnerships between the local community colleges, employers, labor, workforce boards, social service agencies and community based organizations.¹

Spanning career pathways in some 13 sectors, including energy and transportation, the CAAs have been operating for over three years now, have spread to 30 community colleges in the state, and are showing promising results. Overall, 90% of students enrolled in the CAAs completed their courses, 75% of them with a C or better. Given that these students face multiple barriers to post-secondary education and training, these results are indeed encouraging. The CAAs enroll diverse Californians – 55% are Latino, 18% African American and 8% are Asian American. While all age groups are served, 78% are between 17 and 34 years of age.²

¹ The Career Ladders Project works closely with the CCC system and colleges to raise additional resources, provide assistance and support, document as well as coordinate independent evaluation for this initiative. For more information about the Career Advancement Academies go to: <http://careerladdersproject.org/projects/career.php> and/or view the very brief overview video at <http://careerladdersproject.org/videoa/vpages/caaoverview10.html>

² The Career Advancement Academies were highlighted by the state SB70 evaluator WestED on pages 38-42 of the *Report on the Career Technical Education Pathways Initiative to the Governor, Legislature and Department of Finance* issued December 2010. [http://careerladdersproject.org/docs/CTE2010toPrint\(rev1\).pdf](http://careerladdersproject.org/docs/CTE2010toPrint(rev1).pdf)

At colleges such as Skyline College in San Bruno and Contra Costa College in San Pablo, the Career Ladders Project is leveraging the CAAs to help underprepared job seekers prepare for careers as automotive technicians with exposure to hybrid electric vehicles. Additionally, at those same colleges basic and advanced hybrid electric vehicle training will be provided to Master Mechanics throughout the Bay Area in the Fall 2011. We are working in partnership with the Automotive Service Council of California membership of over 1000 independent repair shops on strategies which help small and mid-size businesses meet their hiring needs as well as upgrade the hybrid electric vehicle diagnosis and repair skills of their current employees. Our work with Long Beach City College is focused on transit training as the fleet purchases of electric heavy equipment continue to expand.

Using similar approaches, San Jose City College and Los Angeles Valley College have partnered with their local Transit Authorities to provide bus operator and mechanic training opportunities. Workforce training has provided successful placement of new employees and upgraded skills for existing employees, many earning college credit for the first time, and preparation for successful employment retention and promotional opportunities.

These are just a few of the many examples of the state investments and programs that you can build upon and leverage as you move forward with your workforce development efforts.

In order to help the state reach its goals in clean energy, the Career Ladders Project stands as a partner with the California Community Colleges at once to meet the needs of employers and to create workforce opportunities to prepare all Californians—be they new entrants, currently underemployed or employed—for new and emerging technologies and for skilled employment at family sustaining wages.

Thank you for your time and consideration.