

ECPAC Clean Energy Innovation & Demonstration – Stakeholder Sessions

Brian Young, Dept. of Commerce, Facilitator

Formerly called Research, Development and Deployment, this Clean Energy Fund pathway has invested in strategic research and development projects on new and emerging technologies. There is a somewhat evolutionary history for this program. It initially started as the Federal Match program targeted to a narrow set of research organizations (e.g., PNNL, UW, WSU, BPA) for activities not covered by those pre-commercialization demonstration projects being proposed by the electric utilities (see Grid Modernization below). It later became the RD&D program made available to much wider categories of private and public organizations involved in clean technology development.

The Clean Energy Innovation and Demonstration stakeholders convened for two virtual sessions in June 26 and July 21, 2020 to brainstorm ideas around how best to focus CEF funds in the future.

Stakeholders

The Clean Energy Innovation and Demonstration sessions had representation from stakeholders who have historically received and advocated for CEF funds, and from others who could add a new voice to the conversation. Participants in one or both sessions included:

- Lindsay McCormick – Clean Tech Alliance
- Mike Pomfret – UW Clean Energy Testbeds
- Angela Becker-Dippmann, ECPAC member - PNNL
- Melanie Roberts – PNNL
- Jared Silvia – Blue Dot Photonics
- Aaron Feaver – JCDREAM
- Tony Usibelli – consultant
- Eleanor Bastian & Rebecca Ponzio – WA Environmental Council
- Scott Morgan, ECPAC member – Evergreen State College

Questions Considered

The following is a list of questions that Commerce drafted to guide stakeholder discussions.

1. It is clear that innovation in clean technologies is necessary to meet climate goals. How do we align the crucial innovation funding the CEF provides with current policy in Washington?
2. CETA and Clean Buildings legislation are the primary policies steering us towards our climate goals for 2045. How can we better align innovation and demonstration funding with the outcomes these policies are aimed at?
3. Should we consider other areas of our energy system that we know need carbon reduction solutions but do not yet, or may never, have strong policy drivers to promote it? For example, should we invest in innovation in biofuels in light of a Low Carbon Fuel Standard or other mechanism aimed at liquid fuels?

4. What investments should be made to best foster our information and technology strengths to develop, demonstrate and deploy new clean technologies to respond to needs created by the state's recently-adopted electricity and emissions targets?
5. What improvements could be made to where we direct CEF RD&D funds and/or how the CEF programs are structured to meet our climate goals and boost the state's economy?
6. What are the major technological questions we want to answer and are there use cases we should be focusing on?
7. Should the scope of eligible participants be limited or expanded?
8. How can we define outcomes related to "benefitting Washington" including jobs creation and other economic development activities?

Ideas

- **Focus on Washington's inherent strengths.** In areas like aerospace, R&D, materials, energy efficiency, and the built environment.
- **Collaboration is key.** Incentivize large corporates to collaborate with small, innovative companies as well as our research institutions. This helps ensure successful projects that lead to eventual solutions.
- **Leverage public infrastructure.** Existing infrastructure needs upgrades to meet climate goals and should be used as platforms for demonstration of new technologies. The electrification of transportation and public school buildings are two obvious areas of investment in this respect.
- **Incorporate work force development and education.** All projects should be encouraged to have aspects that include students or provide an opportunity for learning or job training. It is said that a project that includes a student who furthers their learning is never a failure.
- **Incorporate equity.** An equity and justice lens needs to be applied to how we score and consider these projects. The criteria around determining equity and justice is difficult and needs to be well thought out.
- **Align spending with policies.** Alignment with policy goals is needed, and this will move the funding more towards the demonstration side of the RD&D spectrum; however...
- **Maintain innovation emphasis.** We can't lose focus on true innovation. Innovation is hard and risky. We need to be comfortable with the risk and lean into innovation.
- **Factor in innovation lead time.** We need to do this **now**. True innovation takes a long time.
- **Don't be myopic.** Application in Washington is important, but don't dis-incentivize truly game changing ideas that could have worldwide impact.

- ***Leverage federal funding programs.*** State funding is becoming crucial to winning federal opportunities as the pool of available matching funds have dwindled.