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California Energy Commission
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California Energy Commission
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Subject: Docket No. 12-EPIC-01

My name is Willem Walles, Co-founder ofTechnoplex, Inc. in Palos Verdes, California. On behalf of Technoplex, and my colleague William Lyte, I am writing with comments on the innovation clusters element of your EPIC program.

Our firm specializes in the planning and management of innovation clusters. We have been involved with this field for twenty years, with several successful programs

Our clusters have included the following:

- **Pasadena Technoplex** – City of Pasadena, County of Los Angeles, Caltech, JPL, Pasadena City College, global engineering firms
- **San Gabriel Valley Gold Line Technology Corridor** – All of the above plus San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership, City of Hope, Claremont Colleges
- **La Verne Water Technology Program** – University of La Verne, CSU Pomona, Metropolitan Water District, Lewis Group of Companies, Trammell Crow
- **Port Technology Program** – Ports and Cities of Los Angeles and Long Beach, CSU Long Beach, Long Beach City College, Harbor College, Long Beach City College, port industrial firms (port, oil, electric, gas, railroad, engineering)

Our "lessons learned", applicable to the CEC EPIC Innovation Clusters program, would include:

1. **Leverage the State university system, and particularly the Community College District for development and deployment of new technology.** The California university system, properly harnessed for innovation, is one of the foremost creative resources in the world. Surprisingly, on repeated occasions, the State Community colleges have been the easiest to work with, perhaps as they are most connected with the community. There are more than 100 community colleges in the State; they should certainly be the initial anchor for the CEC EPIC program.
2. **Be statewide in perspective, but local in action**. Whether the technology is locally-developed, or brought into the area, it will need to have local stakeholders (representatives, buyers, other parties involved). These groups, area by area, will have to be melded into teams to support the implementation of these new technologies.
3. **Build strong working relationships with local engineering firms.**Critical to this implementation will be the engineering firms involved in facility design or other larger projects requiring new renewable energy technology. In each geographic area, there will have to be focused outreach

to the local engineering organizations. These firms are conservative, and rely on tried and true methods; therefore, it is sometimes difficult for new technologies of any kind to be adopted for widespread use.

4. **Build strong relationships with organized labor**. Equally important are organized labor. It will be worthwhile for engage the major electrical industry unions at an early opportunity, to ensure their comfort level with these new renewable energy technologies. The community colleges are a convenient venue within which this can occur.
5. **Tie the renewable energy technology deployment to major capital projects.** These capital projects will require new renewable energy projects, which have been approved by the engineering community. The CEC should carefully monitor the statewide range of state, federal and local major capital projects, and develop a formal way of involving the renewable energy technology providers in these projects at the earliest possible stage.
6. **Understand the entire client organization for new renewable energy technology.**With large organizations requiring new technology, it is important to work with the entire organization, not just the department calling for the technology. For example, a proactive port interested in renewable energy technology may require it for projects, but that same port's purchasing department may preclude the use of that technology as not meeting internal standards for return on investment.
7. **Bolster the emerging renewable energy technology firms at every opportunity.** They need management, funding, marketing expertise, best practices, and other resources. Often, firms with leading edge technology are not strong internally, and will not be able to deliver or support their new products.
8. **Use the CEC funding to help the State of California function as a team**. California is enormously strong in every sense, but fragmented and internally competitive. This CEC initiative can be the glue which unifies the state, allowing it to emerge in a very powerful way from this recession.
9. **Identify early permitting and regulatory roadblocks to use of new renewable energy technology and work around them.** This is particularly the case for firms from outside of California, who arrive with limited funds to introduce their product. California's complexity can absorb all their money, and drive them to competing states.

Technoplex, Inc. welcomes the opportunity to be an active participant in this exciting program.

Sincerely,

Willem Walles
Co-Founder
Technoplex, Inc.

Our firm specializes in establishment and management of “innovation clusters”.

We have been working closely with the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach on their program for renewable energy-related technologies over the past several years..

We appreciate