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Subject: Response to Call for Comments
EPIC Program
California Energy Commission

These comments are submitted in response to the following questions raised:

Discussion Topic #1: EPIC Implementation and Processes

- What is working well with the Energy Commission's implementation of EPIC and what opportunities are there to improve the implementation of EPIC?
- Please identify and describe ways that the Energy Commission can improve the solicitation process? Is the purpose of each Program Opportunity Notice clear? Are the instructions for completing the application templates (e.g. project narrative, scope of work, and budget) clear and easy to understand?

The EPIC proposal process requires significant resources, and each submitted proposal represents a major effort from premier organizations in California. However, only a small percentage of the proposals are awarded meaning the significant efforts by the un-awarded applicants to prepare an EPIC proposal represent (1) an inefficiency in the process, and (2) a dissuasion for the organization to submit to future solicitations. This inefficiency and dissuasion could be alleviated in two ways: 1) reserve those un-awarded proposals that are high quality proposals for another award process[1] at the end of some regular period to address topics of concern to the State, and 2) conduct a pre-screening through the use of concept papers such that applicants do not waste time on concepts uninteresting to the Commission. These steps would significantly increase the value of the EPIC program to the California ratepayer overall, and assure program quality and value trending up over time.

Additionally, we would like to comment on the detail provided in the solicitation and connection to scoring criteria. For example, in our PON-14-301 submission, we focused on addressing pre-commercial technology but the winning proposals appear to have considered commercial technology. More clarity and greater detail in the PON description would be appreciated. For example, if pre-commercial technology is not necessary but desirable that could be stated clearly. More detailed soring criteria (i.e., scoring for each criterion as opposed to a group of criteria) would be desirable in that many proposals submitted address each scoring metric directly yet receive no feedback on the strengths or weakness of the arguments presented. This could also be helped through more detailed scoring results as have been observed in the past (e.g., with comments describing the major reasons why a proposal was scored highly or not). Finally, we would like to strongly request that future proposals be electronically submitted.

Sincerely,

Brendan Shaffer, Technology Manager, Sustainable Energy & Transportation

[1] Another Award Process. For examples, (1) a future solicitation in the same topic area, and/or (2) the award of the project from a dedicated source of funds for this purpose (e.g., 10% of the annual EPIC budget) where a sufficient number of those scoring believe that the proposal is meritorious for consideration even though the proposal did not satisfy the solicitation, for some reason, to which it was initially submitted.