



# UC Solar

Research  
Innovation  
Education

University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute

4225 N. Hospital Drive  
Atwater, CA 95301

March 4, 2015

RE: Comments on the February 24, 2015 Workshop—Electric Program Investment Charge (EPIC): Checking in on the Implementation of the First-Triennial Investment Plan

Dear CEC Commissioners and Staff,

The University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute (UC Solar) is a multi-campus research institute made up of faculty and students from the University of California's Merced, Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Davis, San Diego, Riverside, Irvine, Santa Cruz, and Los Angeles campuses. Headquartered at UC Merced, UC Solar develops technologies that make solar energy systems more efficient, more affordable, and easier to implement, while also educating tomorrow's solar energy leaders and entrepreneurs.

We at UC Solar are pleased to submit these brief written comments on the Electric Program Investment Charge First Triennial Investment Plan Workshop.

The meeting was well attended, and we were very pleased by the unanimous support for the inclusion of multi-project research centers in the EPIC funding portfolio. As stated in prior comments to the commission, we feel that research centers empower researchers, accelerate the commercialization of new technologies, and attract and retain the next generation of solar scientists and entrepreneurs—all of which provide significant ratepayer benefits. This is particularly true in a fast-moving technology area like solar energy.

We also feel that the sample selection criteria for evaluating research centers and the considerations for centers-only/multi-project solicitations were well developed and on point. However, we did not fully understand the bullet point: "Requires reduction in funds/allocation from other competitive research awards." We are certain that this point would be clarified in any future funding solicitation.

Lastly, while there was some mention of, and support for, non-competitive awards, we continue to support an open competitive process for multi-project center awards. We feel a competitive process will have two significant benefits. First, it will enable the CEC to evaluate a number of

high-quality proposals from research centers throughout the state, and second, it will require prospective research centers to focus on the needs of the state (and electricity ratepayers) as seen through the lens of the EPIC program. We think that even if a particular center doesn't receive an award as part of this process, its mission will be enhanced and further focused by having the opportunity to compete for this type of award.

If the CEC should decide to issue a multi-project center funding solicitation, we look forward to submitting a proposal.

Sincerely,



Dr. Roland Winston  
Director, UC Solar & Distinguished Professor  
Schools of Natural Sciences & Engineering  
University of California, Merced



Ronald Durbin  
Executive Director  
UC Solar Institute

