Regional Clean Energy Innovation Act

Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

Background:

The climate crisis affects our entire economy and it will take our entire economy to address it. Our transition to a 100 percent clean energy economy can drive new innovative industries and create good-paying jobs for working families.

Many of the effects of the climate crisis are regional, which is why we need regional solutions. In Northwest Oregon, we recognize the tremendous potential of marine energy, but those same resources are not accessible in landlocked states. Regions differ in energy resources, markets, and innovation ecosystems. Historically, federally funded research and development has not reflected state and regional capabilities and market needs. Additionally, federal investments often focus on the conceptual and early research stages, leaving valuable projects facing a commercialization valley of death. Federal investments should help connect regional governments with academia, businesses, and clean energy stakeholders to help clean energy innovation in the post-research stage thrive on a regional scale and meet market needs. To successfully deploy clean energy resources on a massive scale no later than mid-century and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we must harness and align local, state, Tribal, regional, and national solutions.

In 2016, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released a report highlighting the value of regional partnerships to advance clean energy deployment and commercialization. The report called for Regional Energy Innovation and Development Institutes (REIDIs) to "spur the development of both early-stage innovations and innovations that show appropriate promise."[1] As part of Mission Innovation, the Obama Administration proposed FY17 funding to support regional clean energy innovation partnerships. The Regional Clean Energy Innovation Act builds on these recommendations. Our transition to a 100 percent clean energy economy will require a coordinated and sustained federal investment in innovation.

The Regional Clean Energy Innovation Act will:

- **Establish a network of Regional Energy Innovation and Development Institutes (REIDIs).** REIDIs would be local, state, regional partnerships that are convened by or acting in partnership with states, academia, DOE national laboratories, businesses, and other clean energy stakeholders in a region to advance the deployment and commercialization of clean energy technologies. REIDIs can fill the gap between research and development and deployment to help innovative concepts avoid a commercialization valley of death. REIDIs will complement existing federal innovation programs, including ARPA-E.
- **Direct the Secretary of Energy to create an Office of Advanced Clean Energy Technologies.** The new office will manage a network of Regional Energy Innovation and Development Institutes to accelerate clean energy innovation in the post-research stage to help projects overcome obstacles to deployment and commercialization, connect federally funded research and development with state and regional initiatives, and advance decarbonization strategies.
- **Foster regional collaboration to accelerate the deployment of clean energy.** The Office of Advanced Clean Energy Technologies will help assess and connect existing innovation ecosystems, national laboratories, and resources to enhance collaboration. The Office will also evaluate regional variations in energy supply and demand, and capabilities to support job creation and new industries when establishing new REIDIs. Once established, REIDIs will have access to technical assistance, modeling, and test beds. The network of REIDIs will coordinate with other programs and laboratories within DOE and other federal research agencies to avoid duplication and work together to address gaps in energy innovation and deployment.
- **Incentivize partnerships and leverage existing initiatives to net-zero emissions.** The REIDIs will help connect state, local, regional, Tribal, and national pathways to net-zero emissions, and improve resilience and environmental outcomes, support a just transition, and create good-paying jobs.

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[1] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2016. The Power of Change: Innovation for Development and Deployment of Increasingly Clean Electric Power Technologies. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/21712.