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Draft Proposal To Create Jobs And Renew North Carolina Communities Through Energy Efficiency And Conservation Block Grant Funds Is Now Available For Public Comment

RALEIGH – The North Carolina State Energy Office and the state Office of Economic Recovery and Investment have posted on the Internet, for public comment, an outline of a proposal to use \$20.9 million in federal Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The grants will help create jobs, provide money for greater energy efficiency in our communities and encourage energy-saving innovations.

Public comments will be accepted through noon on Monday, June 15. The state's application is due to be submitted to the U.S. Energy Department on Thursday, June 25.

Citizens can see a summary of the proposal and offer comments on the state Office of Economic Recovery and Investment's Web site: www.ncrecovery.gov/calendar/publicMeetings.aspx or through the State Energy Office's Web site at www.energync.net.

The summary follows:

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants \$20,925,300 North Carolina Planned Activities

North Carolina has identified four focus areas for utilizing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds through Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants:

1. Energy efficiency and renewable energy for buildings,
2. Technical assistance,
3. Energy conservation programs in transportation, and
4. Implementation of methane and greenhouse gas technologies

Sixty percent (60%) of the allocation will be distributed competitively in subgrants to "non-entitlement" (non-designated) cities and counties through a competitive process for each of the four focus areas. Thirty-four percent (34%) of the allocation will also be distributed competitively to K-12 public school districts, community colleges and other local public authorities in the energy efficiency and renewable energy for buildings focus area. Six percent (6%) of funds have been allocated for administrative expenses.

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Energy efficiency and renewable energy for buildings

“Non-entitlement” cities and counties:

The state will provide local government units subgrants to implement energy efficiency measures and renewable system installations in their communities. All building types --- governmental, residential, nonprofit, retail, commercial and industrial --- will be eligible to participate. The state will issue competitive solicitations for the 90 counties and 526 municipalities that will not receive direct entitlements, but are eligible to receive assistance under this program (*a list of “entitlement” or designated cities follows this draft*). Funding areas include: retrofit existing facilities to improve energy efficiency; design and operation of energy efficiency and conservation programs for buildings and facilities within the jurisdiction of the entity; identification of the most effective methods for achieving maximum participation and efficiency rates; public education; measurement and verification protocols; identification of energy efficient technologies; development, implementation and installation of renewable energy technologies on or in any eligible entity; and onsite renewable energy technology that generates electricity from renewable resources including solar energy, wind energy, fuel cells and biomass. **\$7,150,000**

K-12 public school districts, community colleges and other local public authorities:

The state will provide community colleges, K-12 public schools and other local public authorities subgrants to implement energy efficiency measures and renewable energy system installations in their facilities. The state will issue competitive solicitations for the 58 community colleges and 115 K-12 public school districts which are eligible to receive assistance under this program. Funding areas include: retrofit existing facilities to improve energy efficiency; design and operation of energy efficiency and conservation programs for buildings and facilities within the jurisdiction of the entity; identification of the most effective methods for achieving maximum participation and efficiency rates; public education; measurement and verification protocols; identification of energy efficient technologies; development, implementation and installation of renewable energy technologies on or in any eligible entity; and onsite renewable energy technology that generates electricity from renewable resources, including solar energy, wind energy, fuel cells and biomass. **\$7,044,124**

Technical assistance

The state will provide local government units technical assistance in the form of preliminary energy surveys, identification of potential projects and creation of a strategic energy plan. The state will issue competitive solicitations for the 90 counties and 526 municipalities that will not receive direct entitlements. These entities will be eligible to receive technical assistance funds for activities, including: preliminary energy surveys where the state will provide the local government unit a consultant to perform walk through audits identifying potential energy efficiency or renewable energy projects; development of energy efficiency and conservation strategies or strategic energy plans, utilizing information obtained from the walk through audits; and grant writing assistance for creating a response to general solicitations for projects using EECBG funds. **\$450,000**

Energy conservation programs in transportation

The state will issue competitive grants for the development and implementation of programs to conserve energy used in transportation. Eligible projects include the following: synchronization of traffic signals; state/local/regional integrated planning activities with the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled; incentive programs to reduce commutes by single occupancy vehicles; improvements in operational and system efficiency of the transportation system such as implementation of intelligent transportation system strategies; idle-reduction technologies and/or facilities to conserve energy, reduce harmful air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions from freight movement; installation of solar panels on interstate rights-of-way to conserve energy in highway operations and maintenance activities; and replacement of traffic signals and street lighting with energy efficiency lighting technologies, including light emitting diodes. **\$2,500,000**

Implementation of methane and greenhouse gas technologies

The state will work with non-entitlement cities and counties to purchase and implement projects which reduce and capture methane and greenhouse gases for the purpose of generating electricity or providing the gas for use as an energy fuel source. Projects will utilize methane and other greenhouse gases generated by landfills or similar waste related sources, such as wastewater treatment plants, operations producing food waste dairy farms and other animal operations. A competitive solicitation will be issued by the state for these type projects. **\$2,500,000**

Preliminary criteria for project selections

Jobs Created
Energy Saved
Renewable Energy Generated
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduced
Funds Leveraged
Strategic Energy Plan Completed
Project Sustainability beyond American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding
Aggregated Regional Proposals
Project Timetable
Project Management Capability (including Reporting and Monitoring)
Project Costs
Projects in Economically Distressed Regions

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