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Five New Mexico companies awarded \$1M+ federal grants for climate tech development

Awards underscore New Mexico's position as a leader in emerging climate technologies

SANTA FE, N.M. – Five New Mexico small businesses have been awarded grants of over a million dollars each from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science to further technology innovation and commercialization in climate tech, New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) Acting Cabinet Secretary Mark Roper announced today.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) grants are competitive federal grants that support small businesses engaged in research and development with a potential for commercialization. The DOE recently announced 50 Phase II SBIR/STTR awards to small businesses across 17 states totaling \$61 million for the development of advanced scientific instruments, advanced materials, and clean energy conversion and storage technologies.

“New Mexico is in the news again for innovation, as we are home to five of the award recipients, receiving more awards in this round of funding than any of our neighboring states,” Roper said. “This positive news illustrates that New Mexico prioritizes innovation and a positive business environment. This additional investment into emerging technologies will also provide career opportunities for New Mexicans and diversify the economy.”

“Of the five DOE-awarded companies, four have previously received EDD Office of Strategy, Science & Technology (OSST) grants to support innovation development and commercialization,” Director Nora Meyers Sackett said. “These federal funds further the impact of the state awards and boost New Mexico’s position as a leader in emerging climate technologies and innovation.”

The five New Mexico companies awarded DOE funds are:

EnviTrace LLC (Santa Fe) – \$1,150,000

GeoML: AI/ML for characterizing and managing geologic reservoirs: EnviTrace develops novel methods to address the urgent need for an improved fundamental understanding of complex scientific data representing complex geologic engineering activities related to energy production and storage. Their project reduces the cost, time, and environmental impacts and is critical for transitioning our nation and economy into renewable energy resources and making energy management more environmentally friendly, equitable, and inclusive.

“My team and I are thrilled to receive our second DOE SBIR Phase II grant,” Trace Kliphuis, CEO of EnviTrace LLC, said. “This award will allow our company to further develop our innovative artificial intelligence technology that characterizes geologic repositories.” Kliphuis also expressed deep gratitude for the New Mexico community’s support of their journey.

Mesa Photonics, LLC (Santa Fe) – \$1,650,000

Quantum enhanced bioimaging and sensing for bioenergy: Next-generation biofuels will come from plants that produce fuel directly within the plant. The Mesa Photonics project will develop a new type of highly sensitive, precision microscope for imaging activity in plant cells to help improve next-generation biofuel yields. Mesa Photonics received an SBIR/STTR grant from the OSST Matching Grant in FY21.

Osazda Energy (Albuquerque) – \$1,150,000

Optimization-based design ecosystem targeting performance, reliability, and stability of photovoltaic modules in the solar energy market: Osazda Energy will develop a user-friendly, advanced software platform that enables digital design optimization of photovoltaic systems, demonstrating its first utility by designing metal contacts on solar cells that would increase cell efficiency and improve module reliability against environmental stressors. The grant will allow them to take the product to market after receiving certification, develop the MetZilla paste and technology on new solar cell types, and optimize the paste application, reducing cost and maximizing energy output. Osazda Energy received an OSST Small Business Startup Grant in FY21 and an OSST SBIR/STTR Matching Grant in FY19.

Southwest Sciences, Inc. (Santa Fe) – \$1,149,992

Low-power instrumentation for measurement of greenhouse gas emissions in terrestrial-aquatic interfaces: Southwest Sciences will develop and commercialize improved instrumentation for studies of the sources and sinks of important atmospheric greenhouse gases. The data will inform atmospheric and climate models and provide important information to help formulate strategies to mitigate the effects of these gases on the climate. Southwest Sciences was awarded an OSST FY24 SBIR/STTR Matching Grant earlier this year.

“The new funding from the Department of Energy dovetails nicely with the New Mexico SBIR match grant. These two funding sources will be instrumental in bringing the project technology to commercialization,” Southwest Sciences President Alan Stanton said.

TS-Nano, Inc. (Albuquerque) – \$1,148,779

Nanomodified polymers for the long-term repair and remediation of CO2 wellbores: TS-Nano will continue developing technology for long-term integrity, repair, and remediation of high-value CO2 wellbores. This innovative technology for sealing high-value wells is pivotal in driving the energy transition forward. The company is dedicated to reducing methane and CO2 emissions from operating, abandoned, and orphaned wellbores using its patented sealants and monitoring technologies. TS-Nano was awarded an OSST FY24 SBIR/STTR Matching Grant earlier this year.

OSST works to connect New Mexico innovation to the commercial market and support the growth of New Mexico science and technology startups. The office offers four grant award programs: the Small Business Startup Grant, SBIR/STTR Matching Grant, Advanced Energy Award Pilot Program, and Research University Team Pitch Award Pilot Program.

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EDD's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive. EDD's programs contribute directly to this mission by training our workforce, providing infrastructure that supports business growth, and helping every community create a thriving economy.

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