Renewable Energy-From Point A To B In $49 Billion

By Carrie Ellis

"The billions of federal dollars about to be spent are going to be the biggest government infrastructure investment since the interstate highway system was launched in the 1950s." This statement from a recent blog post [1] refers to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (that went into effect on February 17), which promises to bolster the renewable energy sector with more than $49 billion.*

No longer is the reign of fossil fuel, which has squandered every possible energy-friendly opportunity in lieu of instant dollar-sign gratification. I know, I know-I'm overreacting. I know that many companies producing fossil fuels invest a lot in research and development resources in order to cultivate clean energy, too. After all, it's a race just like any other breakthrough technology.

It just seems, especially coming from an admitted underdog proponent, that the oil and gas industry has been subsidized and supported for too long.

I understand that these conglomerates are currently integral to our survival as a country, but while the oil and gas industries just keep sucking the resources from our earth, our pockets, and eventually our patience, investing in renewable energies benefits everyone involved … The country that becomes less dependent on fossil fuels … The consumer who wants to circumvent volatile pricing … The company that vies for a reduced carbon footprint … The mother who aims to spare her children from dangerous emissions …

I went off on a tangent, but, more importantly, who benefits from this stimulus package? Exactly how much money is allocated and where is it going? And how do you get your hands on it? The following list is approximately how the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act crumbles the $49.7 billion energy cookie:*

- $11 billion for an electric smart grid.
- $6.3 billion for state and local governments to make investments in energy efficiency.
- $6 billion for renewable energy and electric transmission technologies loan guarantees.
- $6 billion for the cleanup of radioactive waste (mostly nuclear power plant sites).
- $5 billion for weatherizing modest-income homes.
- $4.5 billion for the Office of Electricity and Energy Reliability to modernize the electrical grid and smart grid.

- $4.5 billion for state and local governments to increase energy efficiency in federal buildings.
- $3.4 billion for carbon capture experiments.
- $3.25 billion for the Western Area Power Administration for power transmission system upgrades.
- $2.5 billion for energy efficiency research.
- $2 billion for manufacturing of advanced car battery (traction) systems and components.
- $3.2 billion toward Energy Efficency and Conservation Block Grants.
- $500 million for green-collar worker training by the Department of Labor.
- $400 million for electric vehicle technologies.
- $300 million for federal vehicle fleets-to cover the cost of acquiring electric vehicles, including plug-in hybrids.
- $300 million to buy energy-efficient appliances.
- $300 million for reducing diesel fuel emissions.
- $300 million for state and local governments to purchase energy-efficient vehicles.
- $250 million to increase energy efficiency in low-income housing.
- $600 million to clean up hazardous waste that threatens public health and the environment.
- $200 million to clean up petroleum leaks from underground storage tanks.
- $100 million to evaluate and clean up brownfield land.
- $400 million for the Geothermal Technologies Program.

Although I could get into the ins and outs of the deal, essentially, the act endows clean energy with the capital to create new jobs, thus avoiding those uncomfortable meetings in your supervisor's office (which could be portrayed by this Man in the Box video [2] if you need a laugh. OK, so this discomfort may differ from the type that you endure from day to day, but hey, people always tend to think the grass is greener on the other side.)

Avoiding those uncomfortable meetings in the clean energy sector, however, can help us heal our current economic pitfall both faster and friendlier-environmentally, that is.

Although it may take time to permeate some segments of the renewable energy sector, the stimulus package has already spurred some companies to end hiring freezes, tack on more crews, invest in more cutting-edge technology … And it's just the beginning.

One could say that this spending initiative exactly illustrates the aforementioned interstate highway piece of trivia: It takes an enormous financial risk to catalyze a major infrastructure change.

In the '50s, it was highways so housewives could drive to the store to buy new kitchen appliances. Now, we find that it's renewable energy we need to support to lead the American public back into prosperity-it's neither a beginning, nor an end, but a road, an avenue, a $49 billion chance to get from point A to point B.

In this case, let's call it research and development. Postponed projects and deferred dreams can populate America's interstate once more.

* Source: Wikipedia [3]

I'd love to hear your opinion. Feel free to send me an e-mail at carrie.ellis@advantagemedia.com [4].

Dear Ms. Ellis,

This is just a short note to tell you that I enjoyed your Editor's Note write-up regarding the '
the stimulus funds for energy will be allocated. It was a well-written (and entertaining-usua
the situation. Keep up the good work!

Henry J. Grimm, Ph.D., P.E.

My 2 cents ...

Even France makes the lion's share of its electric power from nuclear plants ... and they do
[stimulus package], it's just a power and money grab.

If large nuclear reactors are a concern, here's another neat technology [5] [and more inforr

[This technology] can reduce the need for large transmission infrastructure upgrades by ma
coverage.

[Here's more information] on nuclear fuel reprocessing [7] from waste to re-use.

[Using] photovoltaic solar [energy] for large-scale or commercial power is a scam and every
when the annual yield is approximately 2,450,000 kilowatt-hours ... that's an average 280-k

When a very valid set of solutions to energy independence is staring us in the face, Washin

John Metz

How To Spend $49 Billion On Renewable Energy [8]

By David Dodge

"No longer is the reign of fossil fuel, which has squandered every possible energy-friendly c

This quote from Carrie Ellis, editor of *Chem.Info*, says a lot about the balancing of the playir
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARaRA)-$49 billion dollars committed (so far). F
has held us hostage for the purpose of extorting their profits. (There are an immense variet
quashed innovation and stifled competition to further their agenda. Try *Who Killed The Elec*

This article by Ms. Ellis is not only extraordinarily succinct as to the economic politics that h
she also goes on to describe, in articulate detail, how the money allocated under the ARaRA
futures. These are specific figures, such as $11 billion for a "smart grid," and $500 million f
we're spending to produce renewable energy, promote energy conservation and protect ou
the past and future.

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