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Energy Commission Wins National Recognition for State Leadership in Clean Energy

WASHINGTON D.C. - The California Energy Commission has received two State Leadership in Clean Energy (SLICE) awards from the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA).

"The Energy Commission is honored to be recognized for two of its clean energy projects that demonstrate leadership, effectiveness, and innovation," said Energy Commission Chairman Karen Douglas. "These SLICE Awards confirm that California remains on the cutting edge of clean energy development as it continues to set the bar for effective environmental and climate change policies."

The first award went to the Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research Program (PIER) for supporting an innovative agricultural waste-to-energy system at the Gill's Onions processing plant in Oxnard.

With \$500,000 in PIER funds, the Energy Commission helped construct a system that uses anaerobic digestion to produce biogas from onion waste and feeds it into two 300-kilowatt fuel cells that produce heat and power for the 28-year old facility. The result produces enough electricity to satisfy 75 percent of Gill's baseload power requirements; the project also saves the processing plant approximately 112,000 standard cubic feet of natural gas. The amount of tops, tails, and peels of the onions - waste that once had to be disposed - dropped from 150 tons per day to essentially zero, saving 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel a year from trucks that used to haul away the biowaste.

"Gill's Onions is providing a successful model for sustainable energy and waste handling in the agriculture and food processing industries for California and around the world," said Douglas.

A second award went to the Energy Commission's Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI), a plan to minimize the environmental impacts and economic costs of adding renewable power to the transmission grid.

California has established a Renewal Portfolio Standard goal of receiving 33 percent of its power from renewable sources by 2020. Every major stakeholder group in the state with an interest in developing renewable energy and transmitting it to market is represented in the collaborative process. Called "a big step forward in transmission planning" by the national panel of SLICE judges, California's initiative to set new procedures and formal processes is "a great conceptual model that can link together multiple states and stakeholders...to deal head-on with one of the major issues our nation is facing."

CESA has 22 members representing 18 states and the District of Columbia, many of whom submitted nominations for the 2010 SLICE awards. The panel of distinguished judges included: Michael Northrop (Program Director, Rockefeller Brothers Fund), Gilbert Sperling (Director for the Weatherization and Intergovernmental Program of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy), Glen Anderson (Energy Policy Specialist, National Conference of State Legislatures), Susan Sloan (Director of State Relations at the American Wind Energy Association), Robert Thresher (Senior Fellow at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory), and Scott Sklar (President of the Stella Group). The judges ultimately selected seven state programs for awards. Details on the other programs and more information about CESA and its members can be found at www.cleanenergystates.org.

About the California Energy Commission

The California Energy Commission is the state's primary energy policy and planning agency. It was created by the Legislature in 1974; its responsibilities include forecasting future energy needs, licensing thermal power plants, promoting energy efficiency, supporting the renewable energy market, administering the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act funding through the state energy program, and more. For more information, visit www.energy.ca.gov

About Clean Energy States Alliance

Clean Energy States Alliance is a national nonprofit organization that works with public funds and state agencies to advance clean energy technologies, projects, and markets. CESA provides information and technical services to its members and shares its knowledge with the federal government and influential policymakers. CESA's member states manage programs that will invest nearly \$6 billion in the next ten years to support clean energy. CESA is managed by Clean Energy Group.

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