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City Partners with UCSD to Cultivate ‘Home-Grown’ Clean Technology Innovation

Goal to Assist in the Commercialization of Early-Stage Clean Technologies; Additional Partners Sought

SAN DIEGO – The regional momentum for supporting sustainability and clean/green technology received a boost from a new partnership of the City’s Cleantech Initiative and UC San Diego’s William J. von Liebig Center for Entrepreneurism and Technology Advancement. The City is collaborating with the nationally recognized Center to accelerate the commercialization of environmentally friendly technologies from academia to the private sector.

Clean technology is an emerging sector of a range of products, services and processes that harness renewable materials and energy sources, reducing the depletion of natural resources and reducing or eliminating pollution and waste to create sustainable and secure energy sources. Clean technology encompasses advancements in solar power, wind power, hybrid vehicles, fuel cell technology, tidal and wave power, bio-diesel, green building materials and water treatment systems.

“Last year I announced the formation of the City’s Cleantech Initiative, with the goals of nurturing and accelerating the growth of cleantech companies, products and technologies and fostering sustainable development of green enterprises in San Diego,” said Mayor Jerry Sanders. “This partnership will advance our work in this area and help to transfer home-grown innovations into the marketplace.”

The partnership will provide seed funding and business mentoring to university faculty members and researchers in the region to accelerate the transition of their inventions to a commercial venture. This spring, the von Liebig Center and the City of San Diego will jointly solicit applications from researchers across academic institutions throughout the region. In collaboration with its strategic partner the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the City will provide \$140,000 in seed funding for the commercialization of at least two pilot projects for a full year term. In partnership with CONNECT, the awardees will have access to CONNECT’s Springboard program.

“Our goal is to award six projects this year and establish a mechanism for extending the program into the future, so we are seeking additional corporate partners and donors interested in supporting

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entrepreneurial faculty and student teams,” said Dr. Rosibel Ochoa, Acting Executive Director for the von Liebig Center, a program of UC San Diego’s Jacobs School of Engineering. “This is an extraordinary opportunity to fuel this emerging industry in San Diego and help position the region as a leader in clean technology development.”

Faculty and researchers of the awarded pilot projects will have access to the von Liebig Center’s array of commercialization services, advisors, and ties to venture capitalists and other funding sources over the period of the one-year term.

The seed grants will be used for development, testing, proof of concept or prototype construction. Business mentoring and services will include analyzing the commercial potential of projects, performing market and technical research and developing intellectual property strategies and business models.

The projects will be selected by a panel of industry experts and entrepreneurs following the von Liebig Center’s signature competitive selection process. Applicants will submit a short proposal to the von Liebig Center and those projects that meet the application criteria will be invited to present to an expert review panel who will select the winners to be announced this summer.

For more information about the application process or to learn about becoming a partner in this new endeavor, contact Dr. Rosibel Ochoa, Acting Executive Director of UC San Diego’s von Liebig Center, at **(858) 822-6775** or **rochoaf@ucsd.edu** or Jacques Chirazi, City of San Diego Cleantech Program Manager, at **(619) 236-6326** or **jchirazi@sandiego.gov**.

For general information about UC San Diego’s von Liebig Center for Entrepreneurism and Technology Advancement, visit **www.vonliebig.ucsd.edu**. For more information about the City’s Cleantech Initiative, visit **www.sandiego.gov/cleantech**.

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About UC San Diego’s William J von Liebig Center: *The von Liebig Center’s mission is to inspire entrepreneurship and catalyze commercialization of UC San Diego’s inventions through grants, education and business mentoring. Established in the Jacobs School of Engineering in 2001 with a \$10 million gift from the William J. von Liebig Foundation, the Center has invested more than \$3.8 million in seed grants and advisory services to over 70 technology projects, stimulating more than 15 licenses to corporations and startups. These startups have attracted more than \$71 million in private capital. A study released in 2008 by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Max Planck Institute of Economics described the von Liebig Center at UC San Diego and the Deshpande Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as models of effectiveness in commercializing early stage university-based innovations.*

About the City of San Diego’s Cleantech Initiative: *The San Diego Cleantech Initiative was launched in April of 2007 to help nurture and accelerate the growth of cleantech companies and foster sustainable development of green enterprises. The City of San Diego has identified the development of a cleantech industry cluster as a key economic development goal for the region. It sees universities and research centers as the main source of breakthrough innovations. The City is already working with several companies, providing a wide array of assistance to assist in their business operations.*

About Clean Technology: *Clean technology is becoming cost-competitive with traditional energy counterparts and offers promising economic development to a \$156 billion market within 10 years, according to research by Clean Edge, Inc. According to a 2004 report by Environmental Entrepreneurs and the Natural Resources Defense Council, venture capital investments in California’s clean technology industry through 2010 could seed 52,000 to 114,000 new jobs statewide. As the sixth largest investment category in the U.S. and Canada, clean technology holds the promise of new business opportunities, job creation, and technological innovation for San Diego.*