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For Immediate Release

San Diego Region Awarded \$4 Million Workforce Development Grant to Support Expanding Biofuels Industry

SAN DIEGO, CA (June 29, 2010) – The California Department of Labor today awarded the San Diego region a \$4 million grant to implement new workforce training programs for careers in the emerging biofuels industry. The San Diego Biofuels Initiative, a collaborative effort including CleanTECH San Diego, BIOCOM, San Diego Regional EDC, San Diego Center for Algae Biotechnology (SD-CAB) and the San Diego Workforce Partnership, captured the grant through the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency’s “Green Innovation Challenge.”

The San Diego Biofuels Initiative’s proposal, titled the *Educating and Developing Workers for the Green Economy* (EDGE Initiative) will provide education, training and placement services to unemployed and dislocated workers within San Diego and the Imperial Valley. The EDGE Initiative designed a career-directed approach to help workers gain both employment and the skills and training necessary to move up the career ladder in an industry that will continue to flourish as governments and consumers worldwide seek cleaner alternatives to fossil fuels.

The EDGE Initiative was one of five programs selected to receive a portion of the \$20 million in grants funded through the State’s Contingency Fund and the Federal Workforce Investment Act.

“This award shows San Diego at its best,” said Lisa Bicker, CEO of CleanTECH San Diego. “It exemplifies a successful collaboration between industry, academia and government that will result in putting San Diegans to work while solving the critical challenge of energy independence and security.”

“This grant recognizes that San Diego’s innovation economy continues to foster the growth of new and important industries,” said Joe Panetta, President and CEO of BIOCOM.

“This opportunity will allow us to build upon the already-strong foundation of a biofuels industry that has developed in the region through the presence of the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and SD-CAB in addition to numerous cutting-edge companies,” said Panetta.

A June 2010 analysis of the algal biofuels R&D in the region, conducted by the San Diego County of Governments’ (SANDAG) economic bureau, reports that the industry currently provides 410 direct jobs and \$56 million in direct economic activity and \$108 million in total economic activity annually.

“Funding for new workforce training strategies will ensure that our region, including the Imperial Valley, will have a skilled and ready workforce to meet the continued demands of the emerging biofuels industry and in the end create jobs for our region's citizens,” said Julie Meier Wright, CEO of the San Diego Regional EDC.

“The San Diego biofuels industry faces critical workforce shortages,” said Steve Mayfield, Director of SD-CAB and a professor of biology at UC San Diego, one of the institutions that will train future biofuels workers. “The demand for these jobs will accelerate over the next three years and in order to meet this demand, it is imperative to develop the infrastructure to train the biologists, engineers, and production technicians the industry will require.”

The San Diego Workforce Partnership is leading efforts to generate interest in the biofuels industry through piloting a strategy to increase awareness, knowledge and experience among job seekers in clean technology.

Since the EDGE Initiative’s program curriculum will be heavily reliant on industry participation and input, the San Diego Biofuels Initiative plans to create an Industry Advisory Board that will help guide the program as it develops. Industry partners include the largest clean technology employers in the region—General Atomics, Synthetic Genomics, Sempra Energy, Sapphire Energy, and Verenium. These partners are committed to facilitating and providing internships, on-the-job training and employment.

In addition, the funds allocated will assist in the creation, execution and maintenance of several training programs at the post-secondary, undergraduate, graduate and advanced degree levels including:

- The EDGE Initiative Programs Biofuels Production Certificate
- Biomass Production Certificate
- Biofuels Lab Tech Certificate
- Biofuels Crop Management Certificate
- Advance training in Biofuels Crop Research
- Biofuels Immersion Program
- BioCollaborative Biofuels Web Portal – designed to connect job seekers with industry

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About The San Diego Biofuels Initiative

The San Diego Biofuels Initiative was formed in 2008 to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders including academic institutions, policy makers, the investment community, workforce development professionals and the private sector to address opportunities in the biofuels sector. The public-private partnership is between CleanTECH San Diego, a trade association that promotes and develops San Diego's clean technology industry, which includes 704 companies, BIOCOM, a life science trade association representing San Diego's 559 life sciences company, The BIOCOM Institute, a non-profit that serves as a bridge between education and industry to advance science literacy, and the San Diego Regional EDC, a business organization that works to position the region as the world's premiere business location. Also included in the partnership: San Diego Center for Algae Biotechnology (consortium comprised of the Scripps Research Institute, University of California, San Diego, San Diego State University and Scripps Institution of Oceanography) San Diego Workforce Partnership and MiraCosta Community College.