

Barack Obama Announces Another \$1.2 billion for Energy R&D

March 24 2009, by Miranda Marquit



Solar energy development could get boost.

(PhysOrg.com) -- One of the more interesting areas of technological development in the coming years is likely to be energy development -- specifically green energy development. With new advances in physics allowing for such items as organic thin-film solar cells, it appears that energy technology could be one of the uses for cutting edge scientific advancements. U.S. President Barack Obama is hoping to spur further advancements in energy technology through increased funding for research and development.

Monday, President Obama announced that money would be provided for research at the national laboratories for the Department of [Energy](#). Additionally, grants will be available for those wishing to do research in renewable energy. Areas such as wind, solar, biofuels and hydrogen will be encouraged. Even nuclear energy and questions about storing carbon

dioxide underground will be eligible for grant [funding](#) under the new rules. The funding is in addition to tax credits and spending approved in the recently passed [economic stimulus package](#).

Some of the technologies and companies that are like to benefit from energy R&D funding include:

- * *Serious Materials*, which uses energy efficient materials to make drywall. an energy-draining process of mixing raw materials in a wet slurry and then using outside energy to dry it, the company has a recipe that makes use of chemicals -- and their reactions -- for the drying heat necessary.

- * *Solyndra*, a solar power start-up. This company is receiving the first Department of Energy loan given out in years. Instead of using silicon, Solyndra manufactures solar cells out of copper, indium, gallium and selenide (CIGS) and shapes them into cylinders that are placed on panels. The efficiency of Solyndra's solar panels is between 12 and 14 percent -- a number boosted by a special reflective coating on the roof below the panel.

- * *1366 Technologies* is on a quest to make solar energy cheaper than coal. The company is associated with Emanuel Sachs, who is on leave from MIT right now. The company claims it cracked the \$1 barrier using cadmium telluride for its thin-film cells. But further advances in chemistry and physics are needed to reach that sort of cost-efficiency using silicon.

- * *Winsupply*, a company that offers geothermal, wind and solar equipment, could use tax credits and other funding to make its products more widely available.

- * *Universities* might also receive some funding. MIT is one of the hottest

places right now for developing technology that can boost energy efficiency. Additionally, projects like those at different universities to use LED lights as wi-fi access points could also bring energy use dollars to higher education institutions languishing due to the economic crisis.

The biggest needs in green technology R&D involve using scientific breakthroughs to make renewable energy cost-efficient. Until science and technology can give us energy that costs less than fossil fuels, renewable/[green energy](#) will be limited. But this funding may put energy R&D on that track.

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