

# The Energizing Technology Transfer Act of 2020

Senator Coons and Senator Cassidy

The United States is a world leader in energy research, with 17 Department of Energy (DOE)-led laboratories investigating every aspect of the energy ecosystem to help provide clean and reliable access to tomorrow's electric grid. Despite the numerous successes of DOE laboratories, transitioning innovative ideas to the market place continue to suffer from the "valley of death" effect, where a technology is no longer able to receive research funding, but also has not achieved commercial adoption due to barriers posed by incumbent technologies or other challenges.

At present, few government resources are provided to support the transition of new energy technologies across the "valley of death." Several recent DOE-led initiatives, such as the Office of Technology Transitions<sup>1</sup> and the Technology Commercialization Fund<sup>2</sup>, have begun to provide this transition assistance, but barriers for private-sector engagement with national laboratories remain<sup>3</sup>. Congressional authorizations and support are needed to strengthen the bridge between DOE national laboratories, local governments, and the private sector.

To maintain American leadership on clean energy research and development, market adoption is essential. The *Energizing Technology Transfer Act* helps bridge the gap between research and commercialization by establishing and expanding multiple clean energy technology transfer programs, supporting commercialization opportunities at national labs, and modernizing the DOE for a new era of clean energy commercialization.

Specifically, the *Energizing Technology Transfer Act* supports the commercialization of clean energy research and helps bridge the "valley of death" for DOE-based research by:

- **Bringing together clean energy technologists:** Supports coordination of technology transfer activities at DOE and authorizes DOE's Energy I-Corps program to provide entrepreneurial training to national lab employees.
- **Expanding the impact of national labs and their researchers:** Creates opportunities for researchers, including an entrepreneurial leave program and authority to perform consulting while at a national lab, opens up access to laboratory facilities and equipment to small businesses, and supports activities that promote education in entrepreneurship.
- **Modernizing DOE's approach to transitioning research to market:** Assists DOE efforts for technology transition, by establishing programs to oversee demonstration project management and to streamline prize competitions, authorizes a new milestone-based, pay-for-success model for energy demonstration projects, and facilitates additional flexibility in contracting between DOE and the private sector.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/technologytransitions/office-technology-transitions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/technologytransitions/services/technology-commercialization-fund>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2016/10/f33/TTEP%20Final.pdf>