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Notice of Funding Opportunity

Title: Strategic Pathways and Analytics for Tactical Decommissioning of Portions of Natural Gas Infrastructure

Website: <https://www.energy.ca.gov/solicitations/2020-12/gfo-20-503-strategic-pathways-and-analytics-tactical-decommissioning-portions>

Funding: Total: \$2,000,000. Maximum awards: \$700K-\$1M, depending on project.

Dates: Pre-Application Workshop: December 15, 2020
Deadline for Written Questions: December 22, 2020
Application Submission Deadline: February 10, 2021

Summary: The purpose of this solicitation is to fund natural gas infrastructure safety and integrity projects that meet the following initiatives: Natural Gas Infrastructure Analysis and Strategic Pathway to a Low-Carbon Energy Future; and Analytics for Pilot Demonstration of Strategic Electrification and Decommissioning of Natural Gas Infrastructure. The purpose of this solicitation is to develop multi-disciplinary, strategic approaches for stakeholders and decision makers to determine where trimming portions of natural gas infrastructure is plausible, economically viable, and customer-supported with clearly identifiable rate-payer benefits. The result of the research would be a set of guidelines and criteria that enable decision makers to easily identify potential project sites for natural gas system decommissioning, quantify the avoided natural gas infrastructure costs associated with all-electric service, assess costs of electric system upgrades and building electrification, and evaluate expected cost savings and customer acceptance. The awardees from this solicitation will propose at least three pilot projects where the approaches can be implemented and verified in the near-term or within five years. Recipients of funding for this solicitation may be eligible to compete for a second phase of funding which will support the proposed pilots.

Project Topic Areas:

This solicitation will require applicants to develop and conduct appropriate, data-driven analytics that will illuminate strategic pathways for tactical decommissioning and work with utilities, natural gas customers, and community outreach partners to develop competitive applications to plan for future pilot demonstrations to electrify customer end-uses and decommission parts of the natural gas distribution system within natural gas investor owned utility (IOU) service territories. Applicants for this solicitation must propose at least three pilot sites for tactical decommissioning that can be demonstrated and verified in the near-term (defined as within five years). The list of candidates for pilot demonstrations must include at least one low-income or disadvantaged community as defined in the solicitation glossary. Replicability and the transfer of knowledge gained from these projects are a primary goal. The proposed research work shall address both of the following key areas:

- Research will provide a systematic framework to describe cost and technical requirements and feasibility of decommissioning a subset of a natural gas distribution system.
- Research will develop data-driven analytics to identify promising pilot demonstrations of pipeline decommissioning and end-use electrification and must reflect a collaborative approach including community partners, property owners, natural gas IOUs, electric utilities and customers, to address interconnected issues comprehensively such as safety, technical feasibility, affordability, and equity.

Funding:

There is up to \$2,000,000 available for grants awarded under this solicitation. The minimum funding amount for each project is \$700,000. The maximum funding amount is \$1,000,000. Match funding is not required for this solicitation. However, applications that include match funding will receive additional points during the scoring phase. Only CEC reimbursable funds counts towards funds spent in California and funds spent on California-Based Entities totals.

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Available funding	Minimum award amount	Maximum award amount	Minimum match funding (% of Natural Gas Funds Requested)
\$2,000,000	\$700,000	\$1,000,000	No Match Requirement

Project Requirements:

Successful applicants must demonstrate: A skilled, well-resourced management team to ensure coordination between the different aspects of the proposed research; and, A clearly articulated approach to stakeholder engagement with community partners, property owners, natural gas IOUs, electric utilities, and customers, including dedicated funding and expertise.

Given the importance of stakeholder engagement to the success of this research, a collaborative research approach/method must be clearly articulated. Stakeholder engagement must be adequately resourced and must facilitate input from stakeholders to project teams throughout the entire research process.

Project teams must include one or more local city, county government, or organizations connected to city or county governments, such as joint power authorities, council of governments, and housing authorities that have a role in the development process. Other recommended team members include, but are not limited to: building developers, property managers, property owners, technology vendors, researchers, utilities, and financiers. All awardees of this solicitation will be encouraged to collaborate with each other throughout the duration of the projects to give each awardee the opportunity to learn from the experiences of their peers. The premise of this solicitation is to achieve strategic decommissioning for segments of the natural gas system, realize accompanying cost savings for customers and utilities through a managed transition, and address the needs for a methodological framework, spatially disaggregated data, and a data-driven tool. A cooperative model is needed between utilities, natural gas customers, community outreach partners, developers, permitting agencies, and financiers. Examples of collaboration include joint Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and public stakeholder workshops.

Eligible Applicants:

This solicitation is open to all public and private entities. Demonstration projects in this solicitation must be located in the service territory of a California natural gas Investor Owned Utility (NG IOU), which includes Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, and Southern California Gas Company. All projects in this solicitation must benefit natural gas IOU ratepayers.