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### Hydrogen Plan Lands Funds

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Efforts to promote hydrogen and other "clean" energy industries throughout New Mexico got a boost Thursday. Gov. Bill Richardson's signature on House Bill 251, the Advanced Technologies Economic Development Act, earmarks \$200,000 for the marketing and promotion of the state's hydrogen assets to attract businesses engaged in hydrogen research. The measure also creates a \$500,000 fund to make grants to state agencies, schools, pueblos and other organizations that want to develop clean energy programs.

The \$200,000 "will be used to increase visibility, create marketing plans and suggest more initiatives and incentives that can be done to increase the hydrogen fuel cell economy in New Mexico," says Mike Orshan, director of the Science and Technology Office of the state's Economic Development Department.

That department will work with HyTeP, or the Hydrogen Technology Partnership, a year-old industry-promoting partnership of lab researchers, companies and state government officials; and the Hydrogen Business Council, a group of businesses from New Mexico and other states aimed at supporting HyTeP's mission.

The state began its efforts to attract hydrogen-related businesses last year after President Bush proposed a \$1.7 billion initiative to fund research into what some say could be a "clean" alternative to burning fossil fuels.

Considerable hydrogen research is performed at Los Alamos National Laboratory, White Sands Missile Range and other facilities. The state is also home to a handful of companies developing materials or components for hydrogen fuel cells.

HyTeP and the business council had pushed for \$500,000, but Ken Freese, a LANL scientist on loan to the Economic Development Department to lead the HyTeP initiative, says \$200,000 will help the state get started. Other states, including Michigan and Ohio, are working to attract hydrogen industry.

The strategy will include attracting hydrogen-related companies to move to or locate research facilities in New Mexico, and encouraging the development and use of hydrogen power sources around the state, Freese says. "New Mexico wants to use the assets it has to attract federal funding for demonstration projects and other programs," he says.

The state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department will manage the \$500,000 fund to help public agencies convert to energy-efficient technologies, from lighting retrofits to renewable energy sources like hydrogen fuel cells or solar power, says Chris Wentz, division director for the department's energy conservation and management division. "They focused on public entities because its the taxpayers who pay to run them," he says of the grants, which can be requested to a maximum of \$100,000.