**National Commission on Innovation and Competitiveness Frontiers**

**Working Group on Accelerating Innovation in Clean Energy Technology**

***Session 3 Discussion Guide***

Tuesday, March 5th, 2024

4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**Agenda**

* 4:30-4:40 – Welcome & Recap
* 4:40-5:20 – Discussion
* 5:20-5:30 – Conclusion & Next Steps

**Background & Recap**

The ‘Future of Sustainability: Accelerating Innovation in Clean Energy Technology’ charter identifies four broad issue areas for the Commission and its Working Groups to explore:

1. Boosting investment in development and deployment of promising clean energy technologies.
2. Modernizing the U.S. power grid to enable the clean energy transition.
3. Establishing a supportive domestic policy ecosystem to foster clean energy innovation.
4. Engaging proactively on the international stage to address trade issues and reinforce global competitiveness in clean energy.

When this Working Group last met in October 2023, discussion focused on securing clean energy supply chains. Specifically, the group identified four key themes:

* **Addressing cross-sectoral supply chain vulnerabilities** as a first order priority to prevent widespread impacts.
* **Focusing on enabling factors for clean energy**, recognizing that funding is no longer the primary barrier to clean energy acceleration after recent federal investments.
* **Emphasizing national and energy security implications** of strengthening critical supply chains and deploying clean energy.
* **Developing a robust and durable workforce** to secure supply chains and accelerate clean energy, with a focus on federal partnerships.

**Discussion: Catalyzing Clean Energy Technology Manufacturing and Deployment at the Local Level**

**GOAL: Build on past discussions and begin driving toward concrete policy recommendations.**

**TOPICAL FOCUS: Catalyzing clean energy at the local level**

*The questions below are intended to guide discussion and provide food for thought. Not all questions need to be directly addressed during the Working Group session. Moderators and Working Group participants will collaboratively shape discussion around relevant issues.*

State and local governments play a unique role in developing and building out domestic clean energy systems. Many of the barriers to accelerating the deployment of clean energy technologies involve supporting infrastructure (e.g., transmission and distribution grids, mineral extraction and refining), which are subject to state and local control and decision-making around permitting, siting, and other decisions. Meanwhile, state and local governments stand to benefit from recent federal investments via the IRA and IIJA (e.g., Hydrogen Hubs, IRA tax credits), but often lack the capacity to attract major investment or successfully apply for large grants.

How can federal policymakers, the private sector, and other stakeholders help state and local governments to (1) support and accelerate the buildout of clean energy infrastructure; (2) capitalize on the opportunities and federal dollars presented by the IRA, IIJA, and CHIPs; and (3) more broadly accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies?

**Permitting Reform**

* Should policymakers consider a “green exemption” for permitting processes? How effective would this be at unlocking state and local barriers to timely permitting? Are there other solutions for speeding the development of clean energy projects in particular?
* What specific reforms could be particularly impactful at the state and local level? How can states share best practices with other jurisdictions?

**Capacity Building for State and Local Authorities**

* What tools or instructions are helpful for state and local governments trying to develop clean energy ecosystems? Are there specific forms of technical assistance that are most needed and would be most impactful?
  + Are there special topics where education would be helpful (e.g., transferability of IRA tax credits, grant application process)?Who is best positioned to provide this information?
* What regions of the country are most in need of technical assistance?
* How should capacity-building and knowledge-sharing programs be designed? Who should these programs target?
  + What unique roles do non-profits, companies, and universities each play in educating state and local governments?
* Is the level of staffing a major barrier for state and local governments? How can other agencies, NGOs, or the private sector help ease this barrier?

**Creating Mutually Beneficial Partnerships**

* How can federal agencies better partner with state and local governments to provide capacity and facilitate coordination?
* How can state and local authorities establish partnerships with companies, universities, and other organizations to accelerate clean energy innovation and deployment? Are there opportunities for more targeted collaboration at the state and local level?

**Complementary Action**

* What other policies or ancillary supports could complement federal investments to accelerate the deployment of clean energy (e.g., workforce development efforts, other supporting infrastructure)?
* What role does consumer awareness and education play in catalyzing clean energy deployment? How can state and local authorities encourage individuals and companies to take advantage of new tax credit and rebate opportunities?

**Conclusion & Next Steps**

* This Working Group will meet again June 4th, from 4:30-5:30, to build on the ideas generated in this session and explore new topics. A short summary will be sent to Working Group participants in the coming weeks.