

## **Request for Information: Alternative Fuel and Advanced Vehicle Procurement Aggregating Initiatives**

RFI Number: DE-FOA-0001312

**DATE:** February 25, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Request for Information (RFI)

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this RFI is to solicit feedback from industry, academia, research laboratories, government agencies, and other stakeholders on issues related to purchasing/procurement processes designed to coordinate and consolidate bulk alternative fuel vehicle, advanced vehicle orders, and vehicle subsystems. This is solely a request for information and not a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). EERE is not accepting applications.

**DESCRIPTION:** Alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and other advanced vehicles offer a number of important benefits, such as fuel diversification for energy security, environmental benefits, and potential cost savings over the life of the vehicle. However, AFVs higher initial costs compared to conventional vehicles are a deployment barrier. Higher AFV and advanced technology vehicle prices can be attributed not only to manufacturers spreading costs over fewer vehicles, but also to the complexities of marketing and supplying vehicles to meet diverse local requirements and fleet needs. If vehicle fleets or consumers could purchase vehicles in larger quantities, or participate in aggregate purchasing initiatives, manufacturers and consumers could benefit from assured sales, as well as from reduced vehicle costs and lower resulting prices.

**BACKGROUND:** The Vehicle Technology Office supports a broad technology portfolio aimed at developing and deploying cutting-edge advanced highway transportation technologies that reduce petroleum consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, while meeting or exceeding vehicle performance and cost expectations. Research, development, and deployment efforts are focused on reducing the cost and improving the performance of a mix of near and long-term vehicle technologies, including advanced batteries, power electronics and electric motors, lightweight and propulsion materials, advanced combustion engines, advanced fuels and lubricants, alternative fuels, and other enabling technologies.

This RFI will gather information regarding effective purchasing/procurement processes designed to coordinate and consolidate bulk alternative fuel vehicle and advanced vehicle orders to reduce per-unit prices of commercially-available vehicles. It is anticipated that the aggregated purchasing/procurement process will enable original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and suppliers to increase production volumes, achieve economies of scale, and reduce incremental vehicle costs specific to electric drive, natural gas, propane, hybrid, and other alternative fuel vehicles and advanced vehicle technologies.

*This is a Request for Information (RFI) only. EERE will not pay for information provided under this RFI and no project will be supported as a result of this RFI. This RFI is not accepting applications for financial assistance or financial incentives. EERE may or may not issue a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) based on consideration of the input received from this RFI.*

**PROPRIETARY INFORMATION:** Because information received in response to this RFI may be used to structure future programs and FOAs and/or otherwise be made available to the public, **respondents are strongly advised to NOT include any information in their responses that might be considered business sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential.** If, however, a respondent chooses to submit business sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it must be clearly and conspicuously marked as such in the response.

**EVALUATION AND ADMINISTRATION BY FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL PERSONNEL:** Federal employees are subject to the non-disclosure requirements of a criminal statute, the Trade Secrets Act, 18 USC 1905. The Government may seek the advice of qualified non-Federal personnel. The Government may also use non-Federal personnel to conduct routine, nondiscretionary administrative activities. The respondents, by submitting their response, consent to EERE providing their response to non-Federal parties. Non-Federal parties given access to responses must be subject to an appropriate obligation of confidentiality prior to being given the access. Submissions may be reviewed by support contractors and private consultants.

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION QUESTIONS:** Questions are presented below in three general categories. Respondents can answer any or all questions in every category. Please conform to page limitations and other submission requirements found on the following page.

### **AFV CONSUMERS & FLEETS**

- 1) Are there any existing local or regional AFV purchase programs that support vehicle purchase aggregating?
- 2) How would a group AFV purchasing process fit in with your current annual purchasing process?
- 3) Would your procurement process and leadership agree to joining a Cooperative AFV purchasing initiative which might alter your current purchasing process and procurement cycles?
- 4) Which AFV types are most suitable to bulk purchasing?
- 5) What percentage of vehicle unit cost savings would make the vehicle purchase aggregating initiative worthwhile to pursue?
- 6) Would this process encourage you to purchase more AFVs?
- 7) Would it be beneficial to focus aggregate purchasing initiatives on a single alternative fuel, technology, or vehicle configuration or a broad combination including a variety of alternative fuels, vehicles, vehicle subsystems, components and technologies?
- 8) Would combining an aggregated vehicle purchase program with other AFV services such as fueling and maintenance make it more attractive or less?
- 9) How comfortable would you be to purchase AFVs off of a pre-negotiated , competitive bid/pricing list?

### **VEHICLE OEMs AND VEHICLE SUPPLIERS**

- 10) What are the best business models that could facilitate AFV bulk purchases?

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- 11) How would a bulk AFV purchasing process with multiple buyers impact your proposal, production and fulfillment process?
- 12) What barriers might exist in your process that could hinder an AFV group purchase process?
- 13) What cost savings could be achieved by a smart AFV purchasing effort?
- 14) What advantages might be realized with an AFV purchasing effort?
- 15) Would you participate in an AFV purchasing initiative?
- 16) How does the timing of AFV purchases impact annual/model year manufacturing cycles?

## **GENERAL AFV PROCUREMENT**

- 17) What effective platform or structure would best suit this AFV purchasing effort?
- 18) What types of partners, entities, and project leadership would be needed for the purchasing effort?
- 19) What are methods to forecast areas where alternative fuel vehicle purchase aggregating would be most effective?
- 20) What types of vehicle purchasing teaming arrangements are most likely to succeed under this type of initiative?
- 21) What types of alternative fuel and advanced vehicles provide the best business case for purchase aggregating?
- 22) What are some examples of existing vehicle purchase aggregating arrangements?
- 23) What barriers might exist to realize a successful AFV aggregated purchasing process?
- 24) What would be required to realize sustainability of an AFV aggregated purchasing process?
- 25) How would new vendors be brought into the process?

## **OTHER**

- 26) What other barriers and benefits should be considered when creating an AFV aggregated purchasing initiative?

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RESPONSE GUIDELINES:** Responses to this RFI must be submitted electronically to [DE-FOA-0001237@netl.doe.gov](mailto:DE-FOA-0001237@netl.doe.gov), no later than 5:00pm (ET) on March 13, 2015. Responses must be provided as attachments to an email. Responses must be provided as a Microsoft Word (.docx) attachment to the email, of no more than 3 pages in length, 12 point font, 1 inch margins. Only electronic responses will be accepted.

Please identify your answers by responding to a specific question or topic if possible. Respondents may answer as many or as few questions as they wish.

EERE will not respond to individual submissions or publish publicly a compendium of responses. A response to this RFI will not be viewed as a binding commitment to develop or pursue the project or ideas discussed.

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Respondents are requested to provide the following information at the start of their response to this RFI:

- Company / institution name;
- Company / institution contact;
- Contact's address, phone number, and e-mail address.

**DISCLAIMER AND IMPORTANT NOTES:** This RFI is not a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA); therefore, EERE is not accepting applications at this time. EERE may issue a FOA in the future based on or related to the content and responses to this RFI; however, EERE may also elect not to issue a FOA. There is no guarantee that a FOA will be issued as a result of this RFI. Responding to this RFI does not provide any advantage or disadvantage to potential applicants if EERE chooses to issue a FOA regarding the subject matter. Final details, including the anticipated award size, quantity, and timing of EERE funded awards, will be subject to Congressional appropriations and direction.

Any information obtained as a result of this RFI is intended to be used by the Government on a non-attribution basis for planning and strategy development; this RFI does not constitute a formal solicitation for proposals or abstracts. Your response to this notice will be treated as information only. EERE will review and consider all responses in its formulation of program strategies for the identified materials of interest that are the subject of this request. EERE will not provide reimbursement for costs incurred in responding to this RFI. Respondents are advised that EERE is under no obligation to acknowledge receipt of the information received or provide feedback to respondents with respect to any information submitted under this RFI. Responses to this RFI do not bind EERE to any further actions related to this topic.

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