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A bill to be entitled
 An act relating to the Florida Clean Energy Technology Center of Excellence; requiring the Florida Energy Office in the Department of Environmental Protection to contract with the Florida Technological Research and Development Authority to operate the Florida Clean Energy Technology Center of Excellence; providing for administration by the center of a grant program to support businesses developing a product or service related to energy; providing for responsibilities of the center relating to a Florida Hydrogen Capabilities Catalog, an annual venture forum, and the promotion of alternative energy technologies; requiring conformance with the powers granted to the authority; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. The Florida Clean Energy Technology Center of Excellence.--The Florida Energy Office in the Department of Environmental Protection shall enter into a contract with the Florida Technological Research and Development Authority, whereby such authority shall operate the Florida Clean Energy Technology Center of Excellence to perform the following responsibilities in a manner that is consistent with the powers granted to such authority under chapter 87-455, Laws of Florida:

(1) Administer the Venture Smart Grant Program. The Venture Smart Grant Program shall award grants of up to \$50,000

29 to one or more businesses that are developing a product or
30 service related to energy. The grants awarded shall provide a
31 recipient business with the guidance and technical support
32 necessary to attract and secure investment in such product or
33 service. The guidance and support provided may include prototype
34 development, management-team recruitment, intellectual property
35 protection, or business and marketing-plan development. To
36 receive a grant, a business must be developing an energy product
37 or service for the marketplace, be a start-up or medium-sized
38 business, submit a grant application, and be selected for
39 funding by the board of directors of the authority. The board's
40 selection shall be made after the board considers the
41 recommendations of a three-member review committee that is
42 independent of the authority. The independent review committee
43 shall make its recommendations to the board following the
44 committee's review of the applications that the business
45 development managers of the Venture Smart Grant Program at the
46 authority have identified as the best prospects. The managers
47 shall make such identification by screening the applicant
48 companies in order to select the products and services that are
49 the most promising.

50 (2) Create and maintain a Florida Hydrogen Capabilities
51 Catalog on the Internet. Such catalog shall provide a web-based
52 list of the hydrogen-related research projects that are underway
53 at the state's public and private universities, the businesses
54 in the state which are involved in the development and
55 commercialization of hydrogen energy technologies, and the
56 opportunities for state or federal grants to support development

57 and commercialization of hydrogen energy technologies.

58 (3) Sponsor and organize an annual clean energy venture
59 forum to bring venture capital to promising companies having
60 clean energy innovations.

61 (4) Enhance the energy security of this state and the
62 nation by reducing dependence on foreign oil as an energy source
63 by promoting the research, development, demonstration, and
64 deployment of clean energy technologies, particularly renewable
65 technologies, through the provision of traditional business-
66 incubation services and the administration of the Venture Smart
67 Grant Program as a member of the National Alliance of Clean
68 Energy Business Incubators, a group that was created in 2002 by
69 the National Renewable Energy Laboratory of the United States
70 Department of Energy to assist entrepreneurs in commercializing
71 clean energy technologies.

72 Section 2. The sum of \$400,000 is appropriated from the
73 General Revenue Fund to the Florida Energy Office in the
74 Department of Environmental Protection for the purpose of
75 funding the Florida Clean Energy Technology Center of Excellence
76 at the Florida Technological Research and Development Authority.

77 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2005.