



**NORA VARGAS**  
**CHAIRWOMAN**  
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT  
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**AGENDA ITEM**

**DATE:** July 18, 2023

**04**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**SUBJECT**

**APPLICATION FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION HUB DESIGNATION  
FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

The United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) has released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for a competition through the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs Program) to support regions to “become globally competitive, within approximately ten years, in the technologies and industries of the future.” In Phase 1, the EDA will designate certain regions as Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs). The County of San Diego’s (County) Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA), has been serving as the convener of a consortium of private and public partners, and has the ability to apply for a designation as a Tech Hub in the area of advanced energy and industrial efficiency technology. This designation will signal that the region has a strong potential to become globally competitive in this industry in the next ten years. Additionally, these efforts support the goals set forth in the County of San Diego’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Today’s actions will authorize the Interim Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to apply for Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub) designation from the Economic Development Administration and to work with necessary parties and other stakeholders to establish the consortium needed.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHAIRWOMAN NORA VARGAS**

1. Authorize the Interim Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, upon successful negotiation with appropriate consortium partners, to apply for and accept Technology and Innovation Hub (Tech Hub) designation from the Economic Development Administration’s Fiscal Year 2023 Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs Program).

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2. Authorize the Interim Chief Administrative Officer or designee to execute any contracts, agreements, certifications, or other documents necessary for submission of the application for the Economic Development Agency Technology and Innovation Hub designation.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

As a requirement of the application for designation as a Tech Hub, the consortium must engage underserved communities in planning in an inclusive way and explain how benefits from the tech hub will be shared equitably. This could include removing barriers to good jobs for those from underserved communities, creating new economic opportunities for economically disadvantaged and underrepresented populations, and increasing opportunities for minority business enterprises and socially and economically disadvantaged individual owned businesses.

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

As the key technology focus area is around advanced energy and industrial efficiency technology, there is potential for more sustainable technology because of partnerships and shared information in the consortium. Additionally, projects must be designed to minimize the potential for adverse impacts on the environment and the local community and to account for current and future weather- and climate-related risks.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the application for Tech Hub designation. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

If funding is required in future phases, staff will return to the Board with a request which may include an associated grant application, in accordance with Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

If approved, these recommendations will have a positive impact on the energy and technology businesses. The designation will create a platform for businesses to work together and will help bring resources and investments in energy and technology into the region. Potential benefits could include increased number of high-wage, high-quality jobs; creating new economic opportunities; and building and retaining wealth in the region.

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has released a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for a competition through the Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Program (Tech Hubs Program) to support regions to “become globally competitive, within approximately ten years, in the technologies and industries of the future.” In Phase 1, the EDA will designate certain regions as Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs). The County of San Diego’s (County) Office of Economic Development and Government Affairs (EDGA), has been leading a consortium of private and public partners, and is well poised to apply for a designation as a Tech

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Hub on behalf of our region. Designation would signal that our region has the potential to be globally competitive in this area and is ready to compete for Implementation funding in Phase 2.

Based on preliminary discussions with potential consortium partners, the pursuit of designation will be around the key technology focus area of advanced energy and industrial efficiency technology. The consortium will consist of institutions of higher education, industry groups, economic development organizations, and labor organizations or workforce training organizations. A major benefit for pursuing the designation is the conversations and partnerships that will provide a foundation for this technology, regardless of designation. This application must be completed by August 15, 2023.

If given the designation, Phase 2 would allow the designated Tech Hub to apply for implementation funding to fund activities that can increase regional capacity across workforce development, business and entrepreneur development, technology maturation, and infrastructure. This would bring resources and place the region on a global stage as integral to advanced energy and industrial efficiency technologies.

Additionally, this effort supports all the goals in the County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

1. Support Talent Development for San Diegans of All Backgrounds
2. Increase Economic Opportunities for Underserved Communities, Populations, and Areas within San Diego County
3. Foster Local Business Growth and Entrepreneurship
4. Support the Growth & Resilience of San Diego County's Innovation Economy
5. Support the growth of high-quality, sustainable jobs that allow residents to work, live and thrive in the region
6. Facilitate Investment in Regional Infrastructure that Supports Economic Growth, Environmental Sustainability, and Regional Resilience
7. Protect and Improve San Diego County's Quality of Life
8. Ensure Economic Development Planning and Strategy in San Diego County is Dynamic and Collaborative
9. Leverage Data to Inform Countywide Economic Development Planning and Strategy

Pursuing a Tech Hub designation ensures that the infrastructure and talent to become a globally competitive industry is built in the region and will stay in the region. It will also promote regional collaboration across the public and private sectors.

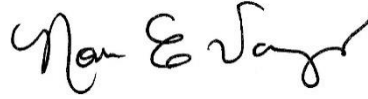
Today's actions would be the first step in these efforts by authorizing the Interim Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to pursue designation as a Tech Hub.

**LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Today's proposed action to pursue a Technology Hub designation supports the Sustainability, Equity, and Community Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2023-2028 Strategic Plan by pursuing opportunities and investments in the region in partnership with businesses and organizations to become a globally competitive Tech Hub within ten years.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nora E. Vargas", written in a cursive style.

NORA VARGAS  
Supervisor, First District

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

N/A