



Written by [James Heiser](#) on October 2, 2011

“Green Economy” Keeps Spending Govt Funds

The i6 Green Challenge is undeniably a very small program; the challenge website acknowledges that approximately \$12 million was available for “proof of concept” models. Under business-as-usual in Washington, D.C., the expenditure of \$12 million would look like a departmental rounding error. In part, the i6 Green Challenge awards will receive a measure of public scrutiny because of the scandal surrounding President Obama’s favorite (at least until recently) example of a corporation of the new “green economy” — [Solyndra](#) — which recently found itself under investigation in connection with \$535 million in loan guarantees that it had received from the federal government. The image of Solyndra being raided by FBI agents may continue to linger for a time — much to the chagrin of the President and his standard bearers in government and the media.



An article for CNSNews (“[Acting Commerce Secretary: Despite Failures, ‘U.S. Can’t Afford’ Not to Subsidize Green Tech](#)”) highlights the “good money after bad” strategy being employed by the White House: In short, pay no attention to the scandals and lack of success — the “green economy” must be pursued at any cost. CNSNews quotes Rebecca Blank, the Acting Secretary of the Commerce Department, as declaring the pursuit of “green technologies” to be a “race” which the nation could not afford to lose:

“The U.S. can’t afford to not be a major winner in this race,” Blank said Thursday on a conference call with reporters. “That necessarily means that there’s going to be some capital investment by the U.S. government. But it is new technology and that means that there is [sic] sometimes risks.”

...

“Make no mistake, that when you’re in a new innovation race of the sort that we are with every other advanced country in the world you are always out there on the cutting edge,” she said, “and that involves both big returns but sometimes involves some risks [of failure] as well.”

As [reported previously](#) for *The New American*, Obama’s pursuit of the mythical “green economy” has already ended in debacle; that his appointees continue to attempt to implement his ideological agenda simply demonstrates the dedication of the political elite to an economic model which has few connections to the real world. The \$12 million being poured into “proof of concept” models is a small drop in a very large bucket — still, however, when the government is accumulating so much debt that it will require generations to repay what has already been spent, the i6 Green Challenge funds are a barometer of D.C. public opinion.



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One of the recipients of i6 Green funds is the University of Central Florida (UCF). A [story](#) from the university had this to say about the grant:

According to a 2009 study, the Central Florida region is ideally situation for the cleantech industry.

The Florida partners will work together to speed up the development and commercialization of research in clean technology areas, such as solar power, building science, energy efficiency, hydrogen fuel cells and ethanol production.

Research centers at universities across the state, economic development agencies, incubators and entrepreneur support organizations will participate in an online network to share proven techniques and encourage technology development in cleantech industries.

“We proposed this network to utilize the existing resources we have in the state and bring them together to help jumpstart the development of clean technologies statewide,” said Tom O’Neal, associate vice president for UCF’s Office of Research and Commercialization and the lead investigator on the project.

In short, although Secretary Blank’s comments might give the appearance of supporting innovation through the i6 Green grants, the university’s promotion of its own efforts makes it clear that the grant will be used to *network* the use of “existing resources.”

Actually, the U.S. Economic Development Administration's [September 29 press release](#) announcing the award of the i6 Green grants declared:

The Obama Administration today announced the six winners of the i6 Green Challenge, an initiative to drive technology commercialization and entrepreneurship in support of a green innovation economy, increased U.S. competitiveness and new jobs.

Winning i6 Green applicants will support emerging technology-based businesses as they mature and demonstrate their market potential, making them more attractive to investors and helping entrepreneurs turn their ideas and innovations into businesses.

But what normally demonstrates the “market potential” of a technology is its ability to generate revenue, not simply win the favor of the political agenda of an administration that may soon reach the end of its power in Washington, D.C. The “green economy” was a dubious concept before the onset of the current recession. How credible today are the claims that such supposed innovations — which still lack the confidence of industry — should be forced into effect by the government, regardless of their economic ramifications?

For the Obama administration, ideological purity may be the standard for assessing the plans to implement the “green economy” — men and women who run corporations and who must work for a living are not as certain of such an ideological standard for doing business.

Photo: Rebecca Blank



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