

216C.145 MICROENERGY LOAN PROGRAM.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

(b) "Small-scale renewable energy" projects include solar thermal water heating, solar electric or photovoltaic equipment, small wind energy conversion systems of less than 250 kW, anaerobic digester gas systems, microhydro systems up to 100 kW, and heating and cooling applications using geothermal energy.

(c) "Unit of local government" means any home rule charter or statutory city, county, commission, district, authority, or other political subdivision or instrumentality of this state, including a sanitary district, park district, the Metropolitan Council, a port authority, an economic development authority, or a housing and redevelopment authority.

Subd. 2. **Program established.** The commissioner of commerce shall develop, implement, and administer a microenergy loan program under this section.

Subd. 3. **Loan purposes.** (a) The commissioner may issue low-interest, long-term loans to units of local government to finance community-owned or publicly owned small scale renewable energy systems or to provide loans or other aids to small businesses to install small-scale renewable energy systems.

(b) The commissioner may participate in loans made by the Housing Finance Agency to residential property owners, private developers, nonprofit organizations, or units of local government under sections 462A.05, subdivisions 14 and 18; and 462A.33 for the construction, purchase, or rehabilitation of residential housing to facilitate the installation of small-scale renewable energy systems in residential housing and cost-effective energy conservation improvements identified in an energy efficiency audit. The commissioner shall assist the Housing Finance Agency in assessing the technical qualifications of loan applicants.

Subd. 4. **Technical standards.** The commissioner shall determine technical standards for small-scale renewable energy systems to qualify for loans under this section.

Subd. 5. **Loan proposals.** (a) At least once a year, the commissioner shall publish in the State Register a request for proposals from units of local government for a loan under this section. Within 45 days after the deadline for receipt of proposals, the commissioner shall select proposals based on the following criteria:

- (1) the reliability and cost-effectiveness of the renewable technology to be installed under the proposal;
- (2) the extent to which the proposal effectively integrates with the conservation and energy efficiency programs of the energy utilities serving the proposer;
- (3) the total life cycle energy use and greenhouse gas emissions reductions per dollar of installed cost;
- (4) the diversity of the renewable energy technology installed under the proposal;
- (5) the geographic distribution of projects throughout the state;
- (6) the percentage of total project cost requested;
- (7) the proposed security for payback of the loan; and
- (8) other criteria the commissioner may determine to be necessary and appropriate.

Subd. 6. **Loan terms.** A loan under this section must be issued at the lowest interest rate required to recover principal and interest plus the costs of issuing the loan, and must be for a minimum of 15 years, unless the commissioner determines that a shorter loan period of no less than ten years is necessary and feasible.

Subd. 7. **Account.** A microenergy loan account is established in the state treasury. Money in the account consists of the proceeds of revenue bonds issued under section 216C.146, interest and other earnings on money in the account, money received in repayment of loans from the account, legislative appropriations, and money from any other source credited to the account.

Subd. 8. **Appropriation.** Money in the account is appropriated to the commissioner of commerce to make microenergy loans under this section and to the commissioner of management and budget to pay debt service and other costs under section 216C.146. Payment of debt service costs and funding reserves take priority over use of money in the account for any other purpose.

History: 2008 c 356 s 7; 2009 c 101 art 2 s 109