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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 26, 2011

Dear Mr. Secretary,

It has recently come to my attention that the Department of Defense (DOD) selected Solyndra LLC as one of three finalists for a potentially lucrative contract via the Defense Venture Catalyst Initiative (DeVenCI) prior to Solyndra's declaration of bankruptcy. While I understand that no DOD funds were ultimately paid to Solyndra, I would appreciate additional information on the decision making process.

My questions are as follows:

1. What was the original DOD requirement?
2. What process was involved in the selection of the three finalists?
3. How were the products technically validated in the DeVenCI process to ensure they were viable and achieved the level of energy reductions and savings advertised?
4. How was Solyndra selected as one of three finalists to receive funds via DeVenCI?
5. Who made this decision?
6. Was there any contact between White House or the Department of Energy and the decision makers at the DeVenCI?
7. Were any political appointees involved in the decision making process?
8. What is the official DOD process to preclude involvement from individuals in contracting processes where the individual has a personal financial interest in one of the competing vendors?
9. Were financial disclosures required as part of the decision-making process, and was there anyone who recused themselves based on financial equities affiliated with Solyndra?
10. How were the venture capital consultants chosen that participated in the DeVenCI?
11. What other energy activities is DeVenCI currently pursuing?

While I believe that we need to work to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, I am concerned by what seems to be an effort to invest in alternative energy technologies based on political expediency rather than rational cost-benefit analysis, demonstrated return on investment or financial viability. To that end, has the White House or other senior political appointees had any influence in the letting of alternative energy contracts or grant awards in the Department of Defense or any of the military services?

Thank you for your service. I look forward to your prompt response and to continue working with you to ensure that we are investing in alternative energy technology in a responsible manner.

Sincerely,



W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress