

U.S. Govt. restores \$2M funding to fuel cell startup

By Colleen Taylor, Contributing Editor -- Electronic News, 5/10/2007

PolyFuel Inc., a Mountain View, Calif.-based company specializing in engineered membranes for portable fuel cells, announced today that Congress and the **U.S. Department of Energy** (DOE) have restored \$2 million in program funding to the company.

According to the company, the three-year, \$3 million grant, originally awarded in late 2004, had been temporarily suspended in early 2006 due to U.S. budgetary constraints after approximately \$1 million had been funded. The program is designed to encourage the development of next-generation mobile fuel cell power supplies.

In a statement released today, PolyFuel said that the DOE has identified fuel cell technology as "one of the key solutions to U.S. dependence on foreign oil and to reducing America's 'carbon footprint'."

Fuel cells are essentially "refillable batteries" that can run continuously as long as fuel- typically a solution of methanol and water- is provided. Fuel cells purportedly have the ability to power not only automobiles, but also mobile electronic devices, such as laptop computers, smart phones, PDAs, and cell phones-- indefinitely.

And PolyFuel said that the DOE believes that portable electronics will be one of the earliest commercial applications for fuel cells, and will help catalyze the adoption of fuel cell technology in the automotive and stationary power markets. Indeed, last year **Samsung** began investigating with fuel cell developer **MTI Micro** the **use of fuel cell technology to power its cell phones**.

According to a recent report by market research firm **Frost and Sullivan**, large scale fuel cells will begin commercial installations before the end of this decade, and that sales of stationary combined heat and power **fuel cells will reach almost \$200 million in Europe in 2010**.

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