



Feeder of the Future Prize Official Rules

September 2025

Preface

The U.S. Department of Energy's Feeder of the Future Prize will be governed by 15 U.S.C. §3719 and this official rules document. This is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisitions Regulations and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under 2 CFR 200. The prize administrator reserves the right to modify this official rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such notifications as well as notify registered prize participants.

The following table describes changes that may be implemented in this rules document:

Date	Modification(s)

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1 Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is launching the American-Made Feeder of the Future Prize. This prize aims to encourage the development of advanced distribution system feeder and circuit designs that align with the evolving demands of 21st century power delivery. This prize will focus on fostering new innovative distribution system feeder designs for rural, suburban, and urban customers. Prize submissions are welcome from all technology innovators, including individuals, small and large businesses, and universities. By encouraging varied perspectives and solutions, the prize aims to accelerate innovation and promote practical, scalable, improvements in the way distribution system feeder and circuits are designed, managed, and evolved. The Feeder of the Future Prize is part of the Digitizing Utilities Prize series conceived and supported by the Office of Electricity.

1.1 Prizes

The Feeder of the Future Prize offers a total prize pool of \$100,000 across three tracks.

Track 1 – Rural Feeder

Consider a rural feeder located far from nearby generation sources. Agricultural and industrial customers on the feeder are electrifying many of their processes, as well as deploying onsite generation. This electrification will drive up power flow (potentially bidirectionally) and the importance of the electric feeder circuit's capabilities. However, summer thunderstorms and winter snow and ice storms frequently cause power outages. The customers experience, on average, 10 hours of interruption per year, often on the hottest or coldest days. The design for Track 1 should work to reduce the customer outage time to less than 20 minutes of interruption per year, including major event dates.

For the purposes of Track 1, a rural area is characterized by:

- Fewer than 50 people per square mile
- 2–8 MW of active power on the feeder
- Longer circuit miles (geographically dispersed connections)
- Primarily residential and industrial customers.

Track 2 – Suburban Feeder

A suburban feeder has around 750 customers, with 75% of them having deployed some form of behind-the-meter (BTM) asset. These could be onsite generation sources and/or energy storage. The nameplate capacity of these BTM assets is, on average, 50% of their daily consumption (both peak production and overall energy use). Furthermore, additional high-power loads are expected to be added to the feeder soon. The feeder currently experiences major outages every 6 months that last about 2 hours. The design for Track 2 should work to incorporate the additional electrified transportation load, as well as reduce customer outage time to 20 minutes for a single “1-in-10-year event” (effectively 2 minutes of interruption per year, including major event dates).

For the purposes of Track 2, a suburban area is characterized by:

- Between 50 and 1,000 people per square mile (may include smaller towns/cities)
- 5–7 MW of active power per feeder
- Short circuit miles (geographically compact)
- Primarily light commercial, residential, and light industrial customers.

Track 3 – Urban Feeder

An urban feeder with 1,500 customers—mostly dense residential and with a current peak demand of 10 MW—that is experiencing rapid deployment of increased electricity using devices. The feeder is configured radially, but has the ability to provide power from a second substation to all or part of the feeder via a handful of manual switches. The design for Track 3 should consider a feeder that will have increased electric using device deployment that would have a nameplate charging rate of 50% of the peak rating of the feeder—this will be both high power loads and home/curbside/workplace dynamic loads. The design should work to do this with a less than 10% increase in capital expenditures by the utility.

For the purposes of Track 3, an urban area is characterized by:

- More than 1,000 people per square mile
- 7 MW or more of active power per feeder
- Short circuit miles (geographically compact)
- Potential for multiple substations/feed-in points tied to a single feeder circuit
- Primarily commercial and dense residential customers.

Competitors are limited to three submissions in total and a maximum of two submissions per track if they are submitting multiple submissions. Competitors must designate whether they are competing in the Rural Track, Suburban Track, or Urban Track. DOE reserves the right to move a submission into any track at its discretion.

Tracks	Winners
Rural	Up to 10 winners receiving \$8,000 each and up to 8 runners-up receiving \$2,500 each.
Suburban	
Urban	

1.2 Key Dates

Refer to the [timeline on HeroX](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

1.3 Eligibility and Competitors

Prize Eligibility

This competition is open only to individuals; private entities (for-profits and nonprofits); nonfederal government entities such as states, counties, Tribes, and municipalities; and academic institutions, subject to the following requirements:

- Submitters are limited to 3 separate submissions.
- An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group) must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- A group of individuals competing as one team may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Individuals competing as part of a team are eligible to participate if they are legally authorized to work in the United States.
- Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
- Academic institutions must be based in the United States and accredited by the U.S. Department of Education to be eligible for cash prizes.

- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (e.g., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the prize.
- Individuals who worked at DOE (federal employees or support service contractors) within six months prior to the submission deadline of any contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
- Federal entities and federal employees are not eligible to participate in any portion of the prize.
- DOE national laboratory employees cannot compete in the prize.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government, such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs, are not eligible to compete.
- Individuals participating in a foreign government talent recruitment program¹ sponsored by a country of risk² and teams that include such individuals are not eligible to compete.
- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a country of risk are not eligible to compete.
- To be eligible, an individual authorized to represent the competitor must agree to and sign the following statement upon registration with HeroX:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form multidisciplinary teams while developing their concepts. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

¹ A foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government, or a foreign government instrumentality or entity, to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, or whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to relocate physically to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at U.S. research facilities or receipt of federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms, including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

² DOE has designated the following countries as foreign countries of risk: Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. This list is subject to change.

2 Background

2.1 Prize Background

The Feeder of the Future Prize is part of the American-Made Challenges program, which is your fast track to the energy revolution. Funded by DOE, American-Made Challenges incentivizes innovation through prizes, training, teaming, and mentoring, connecting the nation's entrepreneurs and innovators to America's national labs and the private sector.

Electricity is a cornerstone of modern society, and customers require a reliable, cost-efficient supply. The devices and loads served by the power system continue to grow, especially with end uses like electrified building heating and cooling systems. These devices, and power customers, are increasingly interconnected with capabilities like demand response programs and Internet-of-Things capabilities. The distribution utilities are responsible for meeting all of this load demand, while also maintaining and improving the reliability and resilience of the power system and operating in a secure manner.

Traditional, radial feeder design has worked well to meet this need so far. However, much of the underlying design comes from traditional operational models, like centralized generation and noninteractive customer loads. Over time, customers' expectations have evolved, as have their capabilities as potential interactive partners in the electric system. This customer dynamic, combined with effects on load from programs such as responsive load programs (e.g., demand response) should change some of the historic underlying assumptions that inform electric system design. Many end-use and grid-side power system devices require communication, introducing additional requirements for cybersecurity and privacy. New technologies and design techniques have the potential to not only meet the new power requirements but also improve other aspects of distribution system operations. Cost-effective solutions that improve the reliability and maintainability of the components, integrate evolving technologies, and meet the evolving cyber-physical security requirements are needed for the next-generation power system.

The Feeder of the Future Prize seeks to explore innovative approaches to distribution system feeder design. Integrating new technologies and design philosophies can provide modern benefits to distribution feeders. Prize submissions have the potential to produce more robust feeder design principles that incorporate the evolving needs of the power system. The ultimate goal is for these results to both influence future feeder deployments (green-field) and provide an upgrade path to existing distribution feeders (brown-field).

2.2 Prize Goal Requirements

Only submissions relevant to the goals of this prize are eligible to compete. The prize administrator must conclude that all the following statements are true when applied to your submission:

- The proposed solution is related to the electric sector.
- The majority of activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States and have the potential to benefit the U.S. market.
- The proposed solution represents an innovation that will move the industry beyond its current state.
- The proposed solution is not dependent on new, pending, or proposed federal, state, or local government legislation, resolutions, appropriations, measures, or policies.
- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any federal, state, or local government office.

- The proposed solution is based on fundamental technical principles and is consistent with a basic understanding of the U.S. market economy.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor's intent to commercialize early-stage technology and establish a viable U.S.-based business in the near future with revenues that do not solely depend on licensing fees of intellectual property.

2.3 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

3 Single Phase

3.1 Goal

Competitors will describe their Feeder of the Future designs and provide justification that their designs are an improvement over the traditional feeder designs for their chosen track. Further, competitors will describe how their designs could address cybersecurity concerns, adaptability to changing loads and system conditions, modularity, and that their design will contribute to promoting economic prosperity.

3.2 Prizes

Up to 10 winners will receive \$8,000 each and up to 8 runners-up will receive \$2,500 each.

3.3 How To Enter

Go to [HeroX](#) and follow the instructions for registering and submitting all required materials before the prize deadline. Competitors can also form teams or find partners through the HeroX platform.

3.4 Important Dates

Refer to the [timeline on HeroX](#) for relevant dates and deadlines.

3.5 What To Submit

A complete submission package for the prize should include the following items:

- Online public video (will be made public)
- Cover page and narrative
- Submission summary slide (will be made public)
- Letters of commitment or support (optional).

All submission materials, excluding the online public video, must be submitted as a PDF.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how reviewers will evaluate and score your submission. Reviewers will evaluate your submission by assigning a single score for each scored submission section, based on their overall agreement or disagreement with a series of statements.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-Responsive	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3.5.1 Online Public Video (Will Be Made Public)

Online Public Video – <i>What’s your team and solution in 90 seconds?</i>	
<p>Suggested content competitor provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The real-world problem you are solving.• How your design is different from traditional feeder designs and how it leapfrogs incremental upgrades.• Who you are (your organization and key team members, as applicable) and what motivates you.	<p>A single score on a scale of 0–6 is provided, taking the following statements into consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The video explains a compelling real-world problem.• The video describes a unique innovation.• The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful competitor/team.

Post your publicly accessible video online (e.g., YouTube, Vimeo). Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways, but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in this area may be helpful. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you create your video.

3.5.2 Cover Page Content

List basic information about your submission, including:

- Project title
- Team name
- Short description
- Key project members (names, contacts, and links to professional online profiles)
- Other partners (if any)
- Your city, state, and nine-digit zip code.

3.5.3 Narrative

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 3,000 words**, not including captions, figures/graphs, or references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see elective template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

To assist competitors, DOE is providing an [elective template](#) to illustrate the types of information needed to evaluate whether competitors meet minimum requirements in the associated critical success factors. Competitors are not required to use this elective template and may submit using any form or format of their choosing. All submissions should address the substantive measures outlined in the elective template outlines and described in this Official Rules document.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology³: Use of generative AI technology in the development of a competitor’s prize submission is not prohibited. Competitors must indicate in the

³ Note that all submissions to the Department are subject to information and disclosure statutes and regulations, including the Freedom of Information Act, Privacy Act, and 10 CFR §1004.11.

narrative (not included in the word count) the extent to which, if any, generative AI technology was used and how it was used to develop their submission (including all submission elements described in Section 3.5). Competitors are responsible for the accuracy, authenticity, and authorship representations of their proposal submission under consideration, including content developed with the assistance of generative AI tools. Reliance on generative AI may introduce significant risks, including, but not limited to, research misconduct resulting from fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism when proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

<p>Narrative</p> <p>Maximum 3,000 words and up to five supporting images or figures (PDF).</p> <p>Elective Template: https://www.herox.com/feeder-of-the-future-prize/resource/2316</p>	
<p>Question 1 – Problem</p> <p>What is the problem with typical feeder designs in relation to your chosen track, and why is solving it important?</p>	
<p>Suggested content competitor provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the limitations of traditional feeder designs and why these may not be sufficient to address the current needs of the electrical distribution systems. Quantify the significance of these limitations with specific metrics (e.g., efficiency losses, grid stability issues, or costs) and explain why now is the right time to innovate in feeder design. Explain why existing feeder solutions are inadequate. Be as technically specific as possible, focusing on areas where your innovative design improves upon traditional systems (e.g., better load balancing, greater resiliency, better cybersecurity or physical security, or integration with additional energy sources). 	<p>A single score on a scale of 0–6 is provided for each of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor effectively quantifies the problem, using clear and relevant metrics to demonstrate its significance, and provides a compelling rationale for why addressing this issue is urgent. The competitor thoroughly explains the limitations of current feeder designs and how these limitations hinder the performance or sustainability of the grid, showing a deep understanding of the problem. The competitor convincingly explains why the timing is right to address this problem, considering current technological, economic, and market trends.
<p>Question 2 – Solution</p> <p>What is your feeder design solution for your chosen track, and why will it be successful?</p>	
<p>Suggested content competitor provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how your feeder design addresses the limitations of existing feeder systems discussed in Question 1. How does your feeder design meet customer expectations and needs, ensuring 	<p>A single score on a scale of 0–6 is provided for each of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor provides sufficient detail to clearly explain the innovative aspects of the feeder design and how it works, enabling a thorough understanding of the design's

<p>optimal effectiveness and satisfaction?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a detailed description of your unique design features, such as novel infrastructure components, topology, or voltage characteristics, that distinguish your feeder design from traditional feeder designs. • Explain how your design compares to the current state of the art, highlighting technical innovations that make it more efficient, adaptable, or cost-effective. • Describe your innovation’s unique value proposition and how it will lead to an affordable, sustainable solution for the electrical grid, potentially benefiting utilities and end users and supporting infrastructure. • If you have any sketches, diagrams, topological representations, or other visual aids that effectively illustrate or support the description of your solution, please include them as part of your submission. 	<p>functionality.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor thoroughly accounts for customers, providing sufficient details to explain how the feeder design meets customer needs, and explains how cybersecurity considerations have influenced their design. • The solution demonstrates a novel and well-founded approach, utilizing reasonable technical assumptions and lessons learned from existing feeder systems or similar projects that are likely to ensure feasibility and success. • The competitor presents a strong value proposition, showing how the solution will address market needs and lead to a sustainable, commercially viable solution with the potential for significant impact. • The competitor effectively incorporates relevant sketches, diagrams, topological representations, or other visual aids that clearly enhance the understanding of their solution.
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Question 3 – Accomplishments and Team

What have you done to date to develop your feeder design, and what makes your team uniquely capable of succeeding?

<p>Suggested content competitor provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your expertise (or team’s experience as applicable) in understanding grid transformation challenges, electrical engineering, energy distribution, or related fields, and introduce key participants who contributed to the feeder design. • Highlight any prior accomplishments or experience that demonstrate the ability to innovate in the energy sector. • Explain why you (or your team, as applicable) has the unique skills to bring creativity and innovation to feeder design, including any experience or past success in overcoming complex challenges. 	<p>A single score on a scale of 0–6 is provided for each of the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor possesses the necessary expertise and/or experience in energy distribution, electrical engineering, or related fields to successfully develop the feeder design. • The competitor (either as an individual or collectively as a team) has different skills and backgrounds, and possess the knowledge, experience, and determination needed to create and further develop the proposed feeder solution.
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Question 4 – Plan

Is your feeder ready for the future?

Suggested content competitor provides:

- Explain if your design incorporates plans to withstand cyber and physical attacks, ensuring its security against potential threats.
- Describe how your solution contributes to promoting economic prosperity, particularly through enabling key advancements or efficiencies.
- Detail how your design can adapt to the integration of future technologies as they emerge.
- Describe the capability of your design to support load growth and increasing electrification, considering scalability, reliability, and resilience.
- Describe how your design is robust and can be customized to multiple real-world situations within your chosen track.
- Illustrate the resilience of your design against extreme weather events, such as storms, ensuring reliability in various environmental conditions.
- Describe how your feeder design incorporates modularity, facilitating ease of installation, repairs, maintenance, and upgrades.
- Assess the aesthetic appeal of your feeder design, considering its visual integration into the surrounding environment.
- Assess the economic viability of your feeder design over its intended lifespan, ensuring cost-effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

A single score on a scale of 0–6 is provided for each of the following statements:

- The solution demonstrates robust security measures, addressing both cyber and physical threats and ensuring the long-term safety and integrity of the system.
- The design promotes economic prosperity by enabling advancements that create value and support growth in the community it serves.
- The solution has the flexibility to integrate future technologies.
- The design clearly supports load growth and increasing electrification, demonstrating scalability, reliability, and resilience.
- The solution exhibits a robust design and adaptability to real-world situations.
- The design's resilience against storms and adverse weather conditions is well-defined, ensuring reliable operation under challenging environmental circumstances.
- The feeder design incorporates modularity.
- The aesthetic design is thoughtfully considered without compromising performance.
- The competitor provides a clear description of the long-term cost-effectiveness throughout the feeder's intended lifespan.

3.5.4 Submission Summary Slide (Will Be Made Public)

Make a public-facing, one-slide submission summary that introduces the competitor(s) and your mission. There is no template, so competitors are free to present the information in any format. Any text must be readable in a standard printed page and a conference room projection and should be in at least 14-point font.

3.5.5 Letters of Support or Commitment (Optional)

Attach one-page letters (of support, intent, or commitment) from other relevant entities to provide context. Letters of support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor into your score. Please do not submit multipage letters.

3.6 How We Determine and Award Winners

The prize administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the competitors are eligible. Then the prize administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject-matter-expert reviewers who independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers will be composed of federal and nonfederal subject-matter experts with expertise in areas relevant to the competition. They will review the competitor's submission package according to the criteria in [Section 3.5.3](#).

3.6.1 Reviewer Panel Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- Experts will review each submission individually and assess the competitor's response to each statement under the four criteria described in the tables in [Section 3.5.3](#).
- Reviewers will score each section on a scale from 0–6, depending on the degree to which the reviewer agrees that the submission reflects the statements for consideration.
- Each section score will be added together to generate a total score for the submission.
- The total scores from each reviewer will be averaged to produce a final score for the competitor. This score will inform the judge's decisions on prize awards.

3.6.2 Interviews

DOE may decide to interview a subset of competitors. The interviews would be held prior to the announcement of the winners and would serve to help clarify questions the reviewers may have. Participating in interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of a competitor's likelihood of winning.

3.6.3 Final Determination

DOE will designate a federal employee as the judge before the final determination of the winners. Final determination of the winners by the judge will take into account the reviewers' feedback and scores, application of program policy factors, and the interview findings (if applicable).

3.6.4 Announcement

Approximately 60 days after the contest closes, the prize administrator will notify the winners and request the necessary information to distribute the prizes. The prize administrator may then publicly announce the winners.

3.7 Additional Terms and Conditions

See [Appendix 1](#) for additional requirements.

COMPETITORS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN APPENDIX 1 MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions

A.1 Requirements

Your submission for the prize is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online by 5 p.m. ET on the prize deadline date, before the prize's submission period closes. Late submissions or any other form of submission may be rejected.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The prize administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Scanned handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, in the sole discretion of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) or NREL, is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and proceed to register for any of the prizes described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE and are in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the prize described here and no other prize on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The prize administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the official rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

A.2 Verification for Payments

The prize administrator will verify the identity and role of all competitors before distributing any prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The prize administrator will notify winning competitors using provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for the submission. Each competitor will be required to sign and return to the prize administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a completed NREL Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). In the sole discretion of the prize administrator, a winning competitor will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications, (ii) the person/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period, (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable, (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The “authorized account holder” is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. All competitors may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

A.3 Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The prize administrator will award a single dollar amount to the designated primary submitter, whether consisting of a single entity or multiple entities. The primary submitter is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member competitors or teammates as they deem appropriate. The prize administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or competitors.

A.4 Treatment of Submission Materials

The elements of the submission that are designated as public will become publicly available as part of this prize. Therefore, these elements must not include trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information.

If it is necessary to share trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it should only be done in an element that is NOT designated as public. Any confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise.

The submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets or confidential, proprietary, or privileged information: “Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets or confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. [End of Notice]”

The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as follows: “Contains Trade Secrets or Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure.” In addition, each line or paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information must be clearly marked with double brackets.

DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third party supporting DOE in the contest assume no liability for the public disclosure of any information in the elements designated public and for any unmarked information any element NOT designated as public.

Furthermore, by making a submission and consenting to the rules of the prize, the competitor is granting to DOE, the prize administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest a license to display publicly and use the elements of the submission that are designated as public and any unmarked information in the elements of the submission that are NOT designated as public for government purposes, including posting or linking elements on websites or publicizing the submissions and competitors in the media and other announcements. The competitor is granting to DOE, the prize administrator, and other third parties a limited license to use or disclose any properly marked information for evaluation purposes only.

A.5 Representation and Warranties

By entering, the competitor represents and warrants that:

1. The competitor's entire submission is an original work by the competitor and the competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the prize administrator or disclosed by the competitor in the submission, and (ii) the competitor has acquired the necessary rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules.
2. To the best of the competitor's knowledge, the use of the submission in the prize, including any use by DOE or the prize administrator, does not and will not infringe upon or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.
3. All persons who were engaged by the competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:
 - a. Given the competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world;
 - b. Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not the competitor's child, the competitor must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian) and the competitor may be asked by the prize administrator to provide permission in writing; and
 - c. Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.
4. The submission is free of malware.

A.6 Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to these official rules and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final award is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

A.7 Resolution of Disputes

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

Neither DOE nor the prize administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or among competitors.

A.8 Publicity

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "winners") will be featured on DOE and NREL websites.

Except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each of the winning competitor's (including all persons appearing in the winning submissions) consent to DOE's and its agents' use of each winning competitor's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state information for promotional purposes through any form of media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration. Additionally, except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each of the winning competitor's agreement to provide a written publicity release to the Prize Administrator to evidence the winning competitor's consent if requested by the Prize Administrator.

A.9 Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and, thereby, do waive and release any and all claims or causes of action against the federal government and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all injury and damage of any nature whatsoever (whether existing or thereafter arising; whether direct, indirect, or consequential; and whether foreseeable or not) arising from their participation in the contest, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the delegation of authority to run this contest delegated to the judge responsible for this prize, the judge has determined that no liability insurance naming DOE as an insured will be required of competitors to compete in this competition per 15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2). Competitors should assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses.

A.10 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Where necessary, materials should be marked as noted in [Section A.4](#). Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a Freedom of Information Act representative prior to the release of materials. DOE does intend to keep all submission materials private except for those materials designated as "will be made public."

A.11 Privacy

If you choose to provide HeroX with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website, you understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information, except as noted in the Rules above, will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE and NREL are not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

A.12 General Conditions

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the prize, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failure, or any other factor beyond DOE's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the prize, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the prize. Any performance toward prize goals is conducted entirely at the risk of the competitor, and DOE shall not compensate any competitors for any activities performed in furtherance of this prize.

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several winners for each prize, DOE reserves the right to only select competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no competitors to be winners and will award no prize money.

All applications submitted to DOE are subject to a due diligence review.

DOE may conduct a risk review, using government resources, of the competitor and project personnel for potential risks of foreign interference. The outcomes of the risk review may result in the submission being eliminated from the prize competition. This risk review, and potential elimination, can occur at any time during the prize competition. An elimination based on a risk review is not appealable.

A.13 Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the prize judge to maximize the impact of prize funds. Some factors outside the control of competitors and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- Geographic variety and potential economic impact of projects
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources are nonduplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and the DOE mission generally
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic variety when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other competitors
- The degree to which the submission is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefits to U.S. taxpayers
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate transformational technological, financial, or workforce advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical or financial uncertainty
- The degree to which the submission supports complementary DOE-funded efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the goals and objectives of DOE
- The degree to which the submission expands DOE's funding to new competitors and recipients who have not been supported by DOE in the past
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments

A.14 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

DOE's administration of this prize may be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to consider the environmental effects of certain proposed actions as part of an agency's decision-making processes. NEPA applies when a proposed action constitutes a "major Federal action"; actions with no or minimal Federal involvement, e.g., where a Federal agency cannot control the outcome of the action, are not considered "major Federal actions" (42 U.S.C. § 4336e(10)(B)(i)). For additional background on NEPA, please see DOE's NEPA website at <http://nepa.energy.gov/>.

While NEPA compliance is a federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, if DOE determines that this prize is subject to NEPA, all participants in this prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on their planned activities such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

A.15 Definitions

Prize administrator – Prize administrator means the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, operating in its capacity under the management and operating contract for NREL, DOE's Office of Electricity (OE), and

DOE's Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response (CESER). When the prize administrator is referenced in this document, it refers to staff from the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, DOE's Office of Electricity, and DOE's CESER staff. Ultimate decision-making authority regarding prize matters rests with the Director of DOE's Office of Electricity.

A.16 Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, competitors agree that if the prize was made based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the competitor to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other noncash prizes be returned to the government.

ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE PRIZE.