Dear panel members,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide an online comment on the 2nd Draft of the Investment Plan. My name is Kevin Kumataka with the County of Sonoma and manage the Sonoma County Green Business Program, which certifies businesses for meeting a high set of environmental standards.

First off, I would also like to thank the panel for acknowledging the importance of the small businesses in the second draft of the Investment Plan, however, I do see an additional opportunities for changes.

Specifically my three main points for this open comment forum are:

1. First, for funds to become available to multimedia programs that focus on not just energy conservation, but also water-use efficiency, pollution prevention, and waste minimization.
2. Second, to provide funding opportunities to programs that service small businesses across the state, not only in rural and disadvantaged communities.
3. And third, for the multimedia funds to be available through one state agency.

As you may know, the small business sector consists 99% of employers, 52% of the workforce, and 45% of the commercial energy use in California. It is obvious that these small businesses play an important role in not just our economy, but also California’s ability to mitigate climate change.

It is evident in the newly released draft of the Investment Plan that your board has recognized the importance of small businesses impact. However, the current funding model makes it difficult for a small business to take advantage of all the state resources that are available.

That’s where I believe the California Green Business Program makes a difference. We are the boots on the ground connecting the all state agency and local municipal resources, effectively to the businesses in our local community. My program, in Sonoma County has helped hundreds of businesses with overall sustainability initiatives. Without the support of the Green Business Program, many of these businesses would not take advantage of the more than one resource savings program.

To give an idea of what it would have been like for Traditional Medicinals, an herbal tea company to get the assistance provided by the Sonoma Green Business Program, they would have had to reach out to 7 separate agencies.

* For waste issues, they would have had to connect to the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency for assistance with waste minimization, who would have also consulted with the Ratto Group, our local waste hauler for specifications on recyclability of certain materials.
* For energy efficiency opportunities, they would need to contact their local PG&E service rep, who are fantastic to work with, but in order to take advantage of the direct install opportunities, PG&E would have referred Traditional Medicals to a 3rd party PG&E contractor program called Air Care Plus.
* For water-efficiency opportunities, Traditional Medicinals would have contacted the Sonoma County Water Agency, which would have referred them to the Sonoma Green Business Program, as we provide the commercial water auditing service to around 1/3 of Sonoma County.
* For assistance with cleaning materials and hazardous waste environmental compliance, Traditional Medicinals would have had to contact their local CUPA, which may be housed by the County Department of Emergency Services, or local Fire Department.

The Green Business Program is the one-stop shop that allows businesses to take advantage of the multitude of resources available, but due to the burden of reaching out to more than one entity for support, it’s unlikely that Traditional Medicinals would have worked with more than one program without the Green Business Program acting as a conduit. Not only that, but the Green Business certification offers a carrot that certifies businesses for their environmental efforts. In fact the Green Business certification was THE determining factor with World Centric, and many other businesses to move forward with replacing their old toilet and t-12 lighting fixtures.

Some additional highlights and benefits of the Green Business Program. In the last 3 months:

* Our program, in partnership with a local non-profit and commercial real estate company has helped organize 2 turf conversion projects, totaling a 70,000 square feet, with annual savings of over 1.75 million gallons of water.
* Helped 4 car washes that never had recycling, begin recycling programs
* Became the Zone Administrator for the Cal Recycle Market Development Zone Program
* Outreached to hundreds of our local businesses about the Air Resource’s Board Cool California Small Business Awards hosted by the Air Resource Board
* Hosted 2 community outreach events to let businesses know about the resources and financing opportunities available to them.

The California Green Business Program also collects metrics on our Green Business Database which we received from the Department of Toxics Substance Control.

* Over 800,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions reduced
* Enough kilowatt-hours saved to power 25,000 houses for an entire year.
* Over 400,000 metric tons of waste diverted from the landfill
* 124 million gallons of water saved
* Over 28,000 gallons of hazardous waste eliminated

To reiterate, my three main points for this open comment forum are:

1. For multimedia funds to become available
2. To provide greenhouse gas reduction funds to programs that service small businesses across the state, not only in rural and disadvantaged communities
3. And for those multimedia funds to be available through 1 state agency

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.