REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
This “Request for Information” (RFI) is to determine which organizations might want to host and administer a Center for Research on Energy and Sustainable Transportation (CREST) and to solicit answers to questions which will assist the New York State Department of Transportation (the Department) in preparing a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP). Organizations that do not wish to become a host, but may want to join with a prospective host as a member of the proposed consortium, can so indicate by responding.

Note: This IS NOT a Request for Proposals (RFP).

INTRODUCTION
The Department anticipates establishing a Center for Research on Energy and Sustainable Transportation (CREST). As currently envisioned, CREST will be a research consortium comprised of member organizations, administered by a host organization under a multi-year contract with the Department. CREST members will compete for specific research projects offered to the consortium through periodic RFPs. Contractually, the Department will have an
umbrella agreement with the host and each time a specific research project is won by one of the consortium’s members, a task assignment will be made to the host under the umbrella contract. The host will then enter into a subcontract with the member to perform the research.

The host will be expected to carry out a robust technology transfer program to serve the needs of all transportation stakeholders in New York State. Technology transfer activities will convey the latest research on the subject of energy and sustainable transportation from the consortium membership and others, as well as convey the experiences of others relevant to implementation of research and policies. Technology transfer activities, at a minimum, shall include a 1-2 day conference held annually at a convenient location within the state. The conference registration fee will be waived for all public stakeholders in New York State to encourage attendance. (Public stakeholders are elected officials, appointed officials and public employees, including employees of authorities and metropolitan planning organizations.) The cost of such conferences and other technology transfer activities will be covered through a fixed annual technology transfer payment to the host. Member organizations are likely to be asked to participate in the conference as speakers, along with outside experts.

BACKGROUND / QUESTIONS
The term “research”, as used herein, includes research, development and technology transfer activities. It is estimated that the Department will annually issue six to fourteen (6-14) RFPs for specific research projects, although no guarantee will be given that any RFPs will be issued. The combined value of these RFPs is estimated to be $1,100,000 to $2,500,000 per year. These amounts are exclusive of any administrative fees (including technology transfer payments) paid to the host.

The Department anticipates prospective hosts and members will be universities / colleges, national research laboratories, public research authorities, and/or private sector businesses with a history of conducting research.

CREST will be administered by a host organization under a multi-year contract with the Department. It is anticipated the contract will be for five (5) years with an option to extend the contract three (3) years, if both parties favor the extension.

Questions:

- It is expected that the host for CREST will spend substantial time on technical transfer activities and administering task assignments and subcontracts with its members. Progress reports on research will be expected.
  - Question 1A: Are you interested in organizing a potential research consortium and serving as the administrative host of the consortium? If you answer NO to this question, then go on to question 1B, but do not answer questions 2 -13.

  Note: A lack of interest may be used as evidence to justify a “single source” procurement.
Question 1B: Are you only interested in being a member of CREST? If you answer YES to this question, do not answer questions 2-13.

Questions 2-13 - Answer only if the answer to Question 1A was YES.

- Question 2: How many weeks should be allowed to prepare a proposal after the RFP is issued?
- Question 3: Should a pre-proposal meeting be held at the Department’s offices in Albany, New York?

- The Department has a contract with the University Transportation Research Center (UTRC) which continues until UTRC is no longer the federally designated University Transportation Center for Federal Region 2. UTRC is a research consortium comprised of numerous academic institutions. RFPs for specific research on energy and sustainable transportation will be offered to UTRC members as well as CREST members.

- Question 4: What credit, if any, should be given for proposed CREST members whom the Department already has access to through UTRC?

- It is in the interest of the Department to maximize the number and diversity of CREST members, because it increases competition and the quality of specific research proposals.

- Question 5: For practical reasons, should the number of initial members be limited to a range? What range?

- Question 6: Are there actions the Department should take which will facilitate and perhaps coordinate the efforts of all prospective hosts when in response to a subsequent request for proposals they begin recruiting members to the consortium they are hoping to establish?

- In order to increase the number and diversity of members, member organizations may be from any geographic location. Member organizations which essentially provide the same expertise are acceptable to the Department because they increase competition.

- Question 7: Given that some members may be located out of state, should members be expected / required to participate in technology transfer meetings / conferences?

- Question 8: Given that members may be located out of state, is it reasonable to expect competitively selected Principle Investigators to attend research project meetings in Albany, New York?

- The Department would like CREST to periodically accept new members. Research institutions occasionally contact the Department and ask how they can position themselves to compete for research work. If CREST is a closed shop once created, then
potential new members would be closed out. The Department would like to avoid closing out new members.

- Question 9: What conditions could the Department place in the RFP to allow for periodically adding new CREST members during the life of the contract?

- Energy and sustainable transportation involves multiple stakeholders in New York State and others beyond the state. While the focus is on transportation, the issues go well beyond traditional transportation stakeholders, so the list of stakeholders must go beyond a traditional list of transportation stakeholders. It is envisioned that these stakeholders, or a subset of these stakeholders, would benefit from receiving timely information on the latest research, pilot projects, and policies being tried elsewhere.

An array of approaches is expected to meet stakeholder needs, including at least an annual one to two (1-2) day conference primarily for New York State public and private stakeholders. Public stakeholders from New York State would have their registration fee waived to encourage their attendance. In addition to a large conference, smaller meetings might be organized by the host during the year - perhaps among members to learn from each other; perhaps to convey the results of research recently completed; perhaps among some stakeholders to discuss research needs and activities of common interest; perhaps to discuss the implication of new federal and/or state laws and regulations. Newsletters and e-mail alerts might also be part of the technology transfer effort.

- Question 10: What selection criteria should be included in the RFP to distinguish among proposed hosts regarding their ability to meet the needs of stakeholders in general?

- Question 11: What selection criteria should be included in the RFP to distinguish among proposed hosts regarding their ability to conduct a meaningful and smooth running conference?

- There shall be no registration fees for public stakeholders from New York State in order to encourage attendance at an annual 1-2 day conference. It is believed that the content of the conference and the relationships formed through conference attendance will aid each stakeholder in developing coordinated plans as they affect transportation. This will add to the cost expected to be incurred by the administrative host of CREST.

- Question 12: Given that administrative costs will need to cover extensive technology transfer activities as well as the processing of contracts and payments, what weight (% of total) should “cost” be given as a selection criterion? For example, if cost were weighted at 100%, then cost would be the only criteria used in selecting a host and the prospective host with the lowest cost would be selected.

- Question 13: What weight (% of total) should be given to the expertise on energy & sustainable transportation when selecting a host?
ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE FOR R.F.I. RESPONDENTS

Note: This IS NOT a Request for Proposals. Rather, it is an invitation to provide the Department with information regarding interest in hosting and administering the CREST. Information obtained may be used to develop a needs requirement upon which an anticipated future Request for Proposals might be based. If further information is required or should questions arise, please contact the NYSDOT Contact Person listed below.

REGISTER INTEREST: Interested parties should e-mail the NYSDOT Contact Person to register interest. A list of all interested parties shall be compiled; the list will be released via an announcement prior to the RFI response due date.

RFI RESPONSE FORMAT: Interested Parties are encouraged to submit a written “Informational Response,” including a cover letter on business or organization letterhead, characterizing interest and background. Information pertaining to the topics and questions listed in this RFI is being sought. It is requested that RFI respondents limit the main body of responses to twelve (12) or fewer pages, but to no case shall the responses exceed twenty-four (24) pages.

SEND RFI RESPONSES TO: Interested Parties can e-mail, mail or fax in their Informational Responses, however the preferred method is for Interested Parties to E-mail their Informational Response in MS Word (preferred) to the NYSDOT Contact Person. Please e-mail, mail or fax RFI responses to:
- E-mail: ahasenkopf@dot.state.ny.us
- US Mail: Mr. William A. Howe, Director
  New York State Department of Transportation
  Contract Management
  50 Wolf Road Suite 1CM
  Albany, NY 12232
  Attention: Mr. Al Hasenkopf CREST RFI
- Fax: 518.457.8475

RFI RESPONSE DEADLINE: The deadline for receiving RFI Responses is: COB, Monday December 8, 2008. Please be advised that although a deadline for receipt of Request for Information Responses has been set, the Department will consider extending the due date should interested parties require more time to respond. Please inform the NYSDOT Contact Person should such a need arise.

RFI QUESTION DEADLINE: The deadline for questions is: COB Thursday November 20, 2008. Please direct all questions which may arise regarding this Request for Information to the designated NYSDOT Contact Person (listed below). There is no guarantee that any questions received after the question deadline will be addressed prior to the RFI due date. Answers for all questions received prior to the Q&A deadline shall be posted to NYSDOT’s website (listed below) and e-mailed to all Parties who register interest.
RFI RESPONSE CLARIFICATIONS: The Department may seek additional information (clarifying or otherwise) following the receipt of the RFI Responses. This may be through phone discussions, meetings or correspondence, and may be with an individual respondent, a subset of respondents, or all respondents.

NYSDOT CONTACT PERSON:

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