

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Subcontract Agreement between the University of Michigan and Unified Solar Inc.

Action Requested: Authorization to enter into Agreement

Preamble:

A statutory conflict of interest situation was identified by the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects while reviewing the Proposal Approval Form which then triggered a review by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. A plan for management of the possible risks associated with the conflict of interest was then developed and approved by the Committee and agreed to by the parties involved.

This proposed agreement (“Agreement”) falls under the State of Michigan Conflict of Interest Statute because Professor Al-Thaddeus Avestruz is an employee of the University of Michigan (“University”), and a member of the Board of Directors of Unified Solar Inc. The law permits such an Agreement provided it is disclosed to the Board of Regents (“Regents”) of the University of Michigan and approved in advance by a 2/3 vote.

Background:

Dr. Al-Thaddeus Avestruz, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, is a member of the Board of Directors of a for-profit company called Unified Solar Inc. (the “Company”). The Company wishes to be a subcontractor on a Department of Energy funded project entitled “1387-1674: Research and Development of Architectures for Photovoltaic Cell-Level Power Balancing Using Diffusion Charge Redistribution,” (ORSP# 16-PAF03917) in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science under the direction of Dr. Al-Thaddeus Avestruz. The purpose of this project is to research and develop enabling technologies to demonstrate, advance, and expedite commercial adoption of Photovoltaic cell-level power balancing using diffusion charge redistribution.

Agreement Terms:

The terms of the Agreement conform to University policy. The period of performance for the project is approximately one (1) year. The amount of funding support will not exceed \$25,800. Since research projects are often amended, this agreement includes provisions for changes in time and scope. University procedures for approval of these changes will be followed and additional conflict of interest review will be done as appropriate.

Impact of the Agreement:

The Agreement will support an effort by Dr. Avestruz to use his expertise and University resources, in collaboration with the subcontractor resources, to research and develop enabling technologies to demonstrate, advance, and expedite commercial adoption of Photovoltaic cell-level power balancing using diffusion charge redistribution.

Recommendations:

This matter has been reviewed and approved by the UMOR Conflict of Interest Review Committee. In light of this disclosure and our finding that the Agreement was negotiated in conformance with standard University practices, I recommend that the Board of Regents approve the University's entering into this Agreement with Unified Solar Inc.

Respectfully submitted,



S. Jack Hu  
Vice President for Research

May 2017