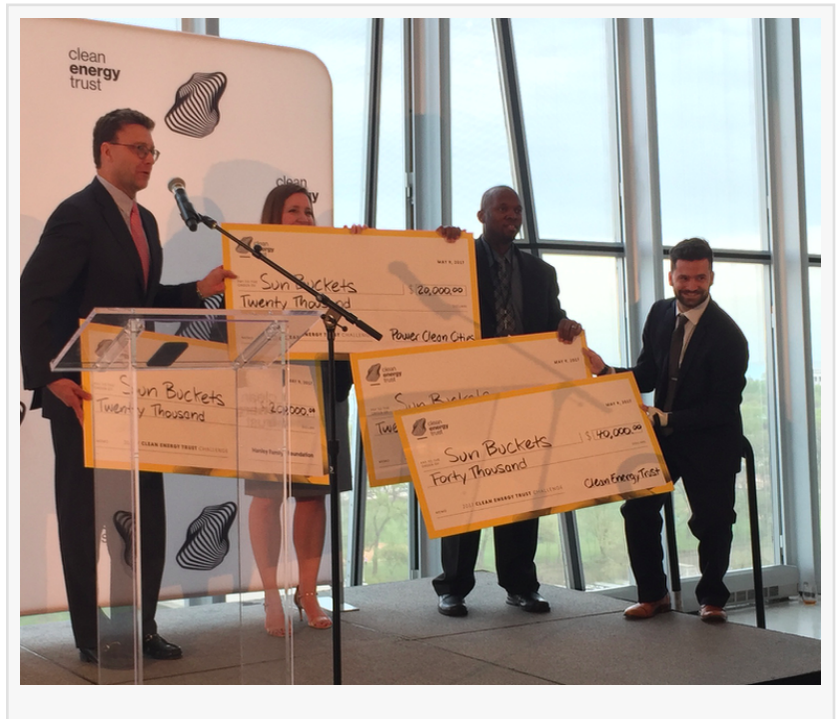


# Clean Energy Trust invests \$950,000 in Midwest cleantech startups at 7th Annual Clean Energy Trust Challenge

*Clean Energy Trust, a nonprofit cleantech accelerator, announced a new round of investments totaling \$950,000 at the 7th annual Clean Energy Trust Challenge.*

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, May 11, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Clean Energy Trust, a nonprofit cleantech accelerator, announced a new round of early-stage investments totaling \$950,000 at the 7th annual Clean Energy Trust Challenge. Entrepreneurs, investors, executives, and students gathered in Chicago for a day that celebrated a shared belief in the power of entrepreneurs to take on the hardest challenges to sustainable life on the planet.



"The funding, support, and market validation that we can provide an early stage cleantech company is enormously valuable," reflected Clean Energy Trust's CEO, Erik Birkerts. "Today, these energy and resource technology companies are nearly starved for capital and support. The Clean Energy Trust Challenge is designed to provide high-potential startups invaluable seed capital and unparalleled coaching and mentorship to help them commercialize their innovations to the benefit of their bottom lines and the planet."

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*Erik Birkerts, CEO, Clean Energy Trust*

Clean Energy Trust's Challenge program has served as a launching pad for Midwestern cleantech startups since 2011. For the participating eight finalist companies, today's event was the culmination of a three-month accelerator program which included hands-on work with Clean Energy Trust's network of expert mentors and advisors like MATH Venture Partners' Troy Henikoff and Northwestern University's Craig Wortmann. Past Clean Energy Trust Challenge finalist and current portfolio company CEO, Felipe Gomez del Campo adds, "the support I received as a Clean Energy Trust Challenge finalist, and especially now as an investee, makes

me feel like I have a real ally in driving to make FGC Plasma a success. "

Today, Clean Energy Trust announced awards for five new companies who will join the organization's investment portfolio.

Aker (Chicago, IL) - \$400,000

Aker is a crop monitoring and analytics platform for large farms. Aker enables more efficient use of crop and land resources while reducing negative environmental impact. Aker was awarded the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) award.

IdleSmart (Kansas City, KS) - \$150,000

IdleSmart provides fleet-efficiency and real-time remote management solutions to trucking fleets. They reduce vehicle idle time by half, reducing fuel costs and saving emissions. IdleSmart was awarded the Wells Fargo award (\$130,000 ) and the United Airlines award (\$20,000).

Lotic Labs (Chicago, IL) - \$100,000

Lotic Labs develops financial products and risk management solutions for natural resource - intensive businesses. The first product set is focused on helping water and wastewater utilities manage financial stresses due to volatile conditions. Lotic Labs was awarded \$100,000 from the Illinois DCEO.

PowerTech Water (Lexington, KY) - \$200,000

PowerTech Water has developed disruptive water filtration technology aimed at reducing treatment costs for water-intensive industries. PowerTech Water was awarded \$200,000 from Clean Energy Trust's discretionary fund.

Sun Buckets (Champaign, IL) \$100,000

Sun Buckets are portable, stored solar energy cookstoves that allow users to cook without fire, fuel, or emissions. Sun Buckets was awarded the ComEd Female Founder award (\$20,000), the Hanley Family Foundation award (\$20,000), the Power Clean Cities award (\$20,000), and \$40,000 from Clean Energy Trust's discretionary fund.

The cleantech sector and the Midwest region both continue to lag behind their category counterparts. Clean Energy Trust believes that investment in cleantech entrepreneurs is crucial and necessary to reduce the effects of climate change and revitalize the regional economy. Since the first Clean Energy Trust Challenge in 2011, Clean Energy Trust has invested \$3.7 million in startups that have gone on to raise an additional \$112 million and create over 300 jobs. With today's awards, the total investment amount is now \$4.65 million.

Today's event brought the best and brightest thinkers and doers in clean energy to Chicago including keynote speakers Henk Rogers, President of Hawaii's Blue Planet Foundation, Stephen Lacey, Editor-In-Chief Greentech Media, Mary Powell, CEO and President of Green Mountain Power, and Dr. Sarah Richardson, of Microbyre and Berkeley National Labs.

The startup pitches, keynote speakers, and attendee discussion all reflected the importance of entrepreneurship in combating the effects of climate change, revitalizing economic opportunity, and enabling double bottom line returns to enrich people and the planet.

About Clean Energy Trust:

Clean Energy Trust funds and grows early stage clean energy startups in the Midwest through direct investment and venture development. Since 2011, Clean Energy Trust has invested in 34 startups

across the Midwest states. Clean Energy Trust Challenge companies have gone on to raise an additional \$112 million in follow-on funding and have created more than 300 new jobs. To learn more, visit [www.cleanenergytrust.org](http://www.cleanenergytrust.org).

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