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Makers of electric vehicle batteries, solar panels and wind turbines have seen a sharp decline in federal government support. "We're in new ground now. The president and the previous president wanted to double the science budgets over a 10-year period," Energy Secretary Steven Chu said in Detroit in January. "But that's not realistic anymore."

It's not realistic after the politically fraught bankruptcy of Solyndra, a Fremont, Calif., manufacturer of solar panels that received a \$535-million federal loan guarantee.

The government's downshift has devastated many aspiring companies. For example, Bright Automotive, a Rochester Hills start-up, had planned to build the Idea, a hybrid delivery van, until the Department of Energy demanded it raise \$345 million in private funding before it would approve a \$315-million DOE loan.

Carbon Motors, based in Connersville, Ind., asked for \$310 million in financing for a diesel-powered police car. The funding was to come from the Energy Department's Advanced Vehicle Technology Program, but after months of encouraging meetings, the company suddenly was told last month its application was declined.

"We were completely blindsided," said William Santana Li, Carbon's CEO. "We had no issues with their terms. For 30 months the department kept reassuring us everything was fine."

Now Li and his team are pursuing private sources of funding to get their diesel-powered police car into production.

While he acknowledges the venture has lost 2 1/2 years waiting on the government, Li remains optimistic Carbon will attract sufficient venture capital.

"This country was built by entrepreneurs and not foolish politicians scared to make a decision," Li said. "We are not going to allow 1 million first responders to go without the tools they need to do their jobs."

Mike Milliken, editor of Green Car Congress, said the fallout from Solyndra, especially in a presidential election year, combined with a gap between electric vehicle battery-making capacity and weak initial demand all contribute to the government's funding retreat.

The Obama administration's widely trumpeted goal of getting 1 million plug-in electric vehicles on the road by 2015 overestimated consumers' desire to save gasoline. Will venture capital, hedge funds and other investors step into the void? Maybe.

"But in general, private-sector investors are more concerned with the numbers, and less with the longer-term goals that government funding can support even without a short-term financial payback," Milliken said.

Electricity Pricing Areas – May 1, 2012

May

On-Peak	Per kWh
West Hub	\$0.03402
NI Hub	\$0.02908

ComEd Average Day Ahead LMP Electric Price

Time Period	Average per Kwh
Apr 1–Apr 30, 2011	\$0.03448
May 1- May 31	\$0.03954
June 1 - June 30	\$0.03851
July 1 thru July 31	\$0.05170
Aug 1 - Aug 31	\$0.04064
Sep 1 - Sep 30	\$0.03058
Oct 1- Oct31	\$0.02968
Nov 1- Nov 30	\$0.02816
Dec 1 - Dec 31	\$0.02971
Jan 1 –Jan 31	\$0.03043
Feb 1–Feb 29	\$0.02963
Mar 1 thru Mar 31	\$0.02894
April 1 - April 30	\$0.02659

Extended Temperature Forecast: Chicago Area

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
High	73	83	86	80	71
Low	62	67	67	61	57

