

The Role of Venture Capital in Funding New Energy Technologies

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With Guest Lecturer Jill Watz

CleanTech Venture Investor and Energy/Climate Expert

Climate change, pollution, aging infrastructure and energy resource price volatility together provide a compelling basis for investing in innovation and development of new energy technologies. Traditionally, investment in innovation in the energy sector came from large corporate and government funded research. When venture capital began investing in new energy technologies, over a decade ago, most investors were captivated by the size of the energy market, but had limited understanding of the technology development or capital requirements, regulatory environment or time horizons necessary to bring new energy technologies to market. Billions of dollars were invested, results were lackluster and the venture community has largely backed away. This talk will provide a perspective on the traditional venture investment model, its suitability to bring new energy technologies to market and alternative approaches and models for funding energy innovation.



Jill Watz

Abridged Biography:

Jill Watz has over 20 years of experience in energy and environmental technology, business and policy. She is the founder and Managing Director at Ascian Technology Advisors an investment advisory firm focused on business strategy, technology development, operational management and financing for early and growth-stage companies in the energy and natural resource sector. She has been a Venture Partner for the past six years with Vulcan Capital, a Seattle based private wealth management group with over \$10B of assets under management where she's been responsible for investment strategy, due diligence and portfolio management in the clean technology sector, with specific emphasis on solar, geothermal, nuclear, advanced materials, energy efficiency/smart grid technologies and emerging market distributed electricity generation. She has served on or as an advisor to the boards of several early stage clean-tech start-ups including: SiOnyx, Siluria Technologies, Infinia, and AltaRock Energy. She spent ten years on the technical staff at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), where she held senior management and technical research positions in applied energy technology directing multi-disciplinary research projects in the areas of oil and gas exploration and production, geothermal energy, energy storage and conversion technologies, alternative fuels and energy and climate policy. She is a participating scientist at LLNL and is also a member of the Corporate Advisory Committee to the Sustainable Accounting Standards Board (SASB). Jill has a B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from University of California at San Diego and S.M. degrees in both Civil and Environmental Engineering and Technology and Policy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

