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SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) -- Gov. Bill Richardson and members of New Mexico's congressional delegation are applauding a decision by the Obama administration to change how federal stimulus money will be allocated for so-called "smart grid" initiatives.

Richardson, Sens. Tom Udall and Rep. Ben Ray Lujan had sent letters earlier this month to Energy Secretary Steven Chu about their concerns with proposed funding guidelines for projects aimed at bringing electricity transmission into the digital age.

They announced Monday that the administration will expand the amount of funding possible for individual Smart Grid Investment Grants from \$20 million to \$200 million.

The maximum available for regional smart grid demonstration projects will be \$100 million, up from \$50 million.

"Increasing these guidelines will allow consideration of projects of the size and scope needed to help the United States move toward a modern, well-functioning grid that integrates diverse technologies, not just clean energy sources," Richardson said.

The governor said New Mexico is one of the few states in position to submit a comprehensive proposal for smart grid technology and Monday's announcement was encouraging.

Udall said the administration's decision recognizes that smaller states like New Mexico should continue to aggressively pursue initiatives to help revolutionize the nation's energy infrastructure.

Lujan said developing clean energy infrastructure in New Mexico will lead to jobs, improved efficiency and financial savings for families.

In addition to writing a letter to Chu, Richardson said he spoke to President Barack Obama about New Mexico's concerns with the funding guidelines when the president visited the state last week.

Richardson said he's still concerned about a requirement that states provide a 50 percent match for project funding. Such a match could "unfairly disqualify" states like New Mexico, he said.

"As I told President Obama, Vice President (Joe) Biden and Secretary Chu, a 50 percent match is excessive even in the best of times let alone when so many states are barely meeting their own obligations," Richardson said.

On Monday, Chu and Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said the administration plans to move aggressively to establish technology standards needed for modernizing the electric power grid.

The two cabinet secretaries announced 16 steps to create uniform electricity standards for the grid after meeting with business executives and state regulators at the White House.

Standards are needed to ensure that equipment - such as digital "smart" electric meters - from different companies work in harmony. Chu said the first standards will be implemented over the next few months.