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NALA Systems Awarded Phase II Grant from National Science Foundation for Innovative Membranes for Water Purification

Durham, NC - April 21, 2021 - NALA Systems was awarded \$1,000,000 in non-dilutive phase II SBIR funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for “Chemically Resistant Membranes for Water Purification”. NALA Systems’ unique chlorine tolerant membranes are game changing for industrial and municipal users of reverse osmosis (RO). The technology will provide more efficient and sustainable desalination and water purification operations using RO. The follow-on phase II project, led by NALA’s CTO and inventor, Judy Riffle, Ph.D., will fund continued development and commercialization of high-performance RO membranes that will be uniquely durable and non-fouling, meaningfully reducing the cost of water treatment and desalination versus existing membrane solutions.

Reverse osmosis is widely used domestically and globally for water purification and industrial liquid separations in food and chemical process operations. It is applied to produce high purity water in a wide range of industries from beverages and pharmaceuticals to energy and electronics. NALA’s membranes will bring value in a wide range of industries. While RO is the most cost-effective method of producing clean water from salty water, building and operating RO systems is still extremely expensive and complicated, limiting its potential impact on the global issue of water scarcity.

NALA Systems was founded in 2018 to bring chlorine tolerant RO membranes to market. Judy and NALA CEO Sue Mecham are a mother daughter duo that lead the NALA Systems team of chemists and engineers. *“The water purification industry has been waiting for durable, chemically resistant, high-performance RO membranes like ours for decades and I’m extremely proud of our team at NALA Systems for the rapid progress we have made in moving this innovation forward. This NSF SBIR Phase II award is a validation of the impact and value of our patent pending materials, technical capabilities, and commercialization potential. KUDOS TO THE TEAM!” - Sue Mecham, CEO-NALA Systems.*

The NSF award will support both technical development and commercialization of the new RO membrane products from exploration of membrane performance in comparison to industry benchmarks to full-scale manufacturing trials. NALA is moving rapidly toward producing prototype spiral-wound membranes for small pilot trials to demonstrate the function of the membranes as a better drop-in replacement in current RO systems. In addition to non-dilutive grant funding from NSF, NALA Systems has received investments from venture capital firms *Good Growth Capital (GGC)* and *Oval Park Capital*, and angel groups *RTP Capital* and *WALE-Network for Entrepreneurs in Wilmington*.

About the NSF’s Small Business Programs

America’s Seed Fund powered by NSF awards \$200 million annually to startups and small businesses, transforming scientific discovery into products and services with commercial and societal impact. Startups working across almost all areas of science and technology can receive up to \$2 million to support research and development (R&D), helping de-risk technology for commercial success. America’s Seed Fund is congressionally mandated through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. The NSF is an independent federal agency with



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a budget of about \$8.5 billion that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering. For more information, visit seedfund.nsf.gov.

About NALA Systems

Nala Systems is a women led Durham based startup company dedicated to bringing better reverse osmosis membranes to enable the lower-cost operation and broaden the use of reverse osmosis technology. Since 2018 they have envisioned a world where clean water is readily available to everyone for every purpose. They are currently based and growing at First Flight Venture Center in RTP, NC. www.nalasystems.com

Contact

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