



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT *of* MASSACHUSETTS

[U.S. Attorneys](#) » [District of Massachusetts](#) » [News](#)

Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, March 20, 2018

Advanced Thermal Technologies and CEO Agree to Pay \$100,000 for Failing to Account for Federal Research Funds

Boston – Advanced Thermal Technologies, LLC (ATT), and its President and Chief Operating Officer, James W. Connell, of Upton, Mass., agreed today to pay \$100,000 to resolve allegations that they failed to account for a portion of federal research grants they received and that they used a portion of the funds unlawfully.

“This office will take action when grant recipients misuse federal taxpayer money and fail to account for federal research dollars,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “There are many deserving researchers who apply for government grants, and it is unacceptable and unethical for scientists to submit falsified information in order to gain a competitive edge.”

Allison Lerner, NSF Inspector General said: “The SBIR program is a valuable tool in advancing NSF’s mission to promote the progress of science by increasing opportunities for small businesses to undertake cutting-edge scientific research, and it is essential to vigorously pursue oversight of these taxpayer funds.”

April G. Stephenson, DOE Principal Deputy Inspector General said: “This settlement serves as a reminder that fraud in the SBIR Program will not be tolerated. The SBIR Program is an essential Department of Energy program that supports scientific excellence and technological innovation and we will investigate and pursue fraud aggressively.”

In a complaint filed today, the government alleges that ATT and Connell failed to account for federal grant funds under eight awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in connection with the agencies’ Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. These programs grant awards to small, for-profit businesses, such as ATT, for the purpose of stimulating technological innovation, using small businesses to meet federal research and development

needs, and increasing private sector commercialization of innovations derived from federal research and development. NSF and DOE awarded the research funds to ATT and Connell in response to grant applications that proposed research to identify and develop different materials and methods for dissipating the heat generated by high power electronics.

The government's complaint alleges that on multiple occasions from 2007 to 2016, Connell personally certified to NSF and DOE that: (1) ATT maintained an adequate financial system to account for the award funds as required by regulations, (2) ATT would comply with the award terms and conditions, and (3) ATT spent the award funds and performed the research in accordance with the terms and conditions. The complaint alleges that these certifications were often false because ATT and Connell failed to prepare and maintain documentation substantiating that they used the funds for the awarded research projects, and, on occasion, that they claimed and received funds for NSF projects that were already completed.

U.S. Attorney Lelling, NSF Inspector General Lerner and DOE Principal Deputy Inspector General Stephenson made the announcement today. The matter was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anita Johnson of Lelling's Civil Division.

Topic(s):

Grants

Component(s):

USAO - Massachusetts

Updated March 20, 2018