



Press Release

## ***Synthetic Genomics Inc. Applauds the Venter Institute's Work in Creating the First Synthetic Bacterial Cell***

**LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA – May 20, 2010** — Synthetic Genomics Inc. (SGI), a privately held company applying synthetic genomic-driven commercial solutions to a variety of global challenges including energy and the environment, applauds the creation of the first synthetic bacterial cell by researchers at the J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI). SGI has provided nearly \$30 million in funding for this work since 2005.

SGI was founded in 2005 by Drs. J. Craig Venter and Hamilton Smith, along with business leaders Juan Enriquez and David Kiernan, to develop commercial applications based on the basic science research of JCVI's synthetic genomics group. The initial business focus of SGI has centered on bioenergy; however the company has now extended its focus to areas of food production, clean water and vaccine development. Many aspects of JCVI's synthetic genomics work have been integrated into the SGI business programs. SGI plans to revolutionize many industrial processes by designing new cells that synthesize the desired commercial products.

"With the growing impact of climate change, increased global demand for energy, and the potential for environmental impact issues surrounding the drilling for oil and mining for coal, it is clear that new technologies are needed in these areas," said Ari Patrinos, SGI President. "Synthetic genomics research from JCVI and the applied science at SGI have the potential to address these issues."

SGI's alliance with Exxon Mobil Research and Engineering (EMRE) group to create algal biofuels is one example of the important programs at SGI that could benefit from the new tools and technological advances of the synthetic genomics research. This program, announced in July 2009, is a long term research and development alliance focused on finding and optimizing (through synthetic genome techniques and other more traditional metabolic engineering techniques) algae to produce biological crude oil replacements efficiently.

Dr. Venter and the SGI team, as world leaders in developing and driving this area of science, also believe that addressing the societal and ethical issues surrounding synthetic genomics are essential aspects in conducting this research. As such, he and the team have spent equal time focused on these issues in conjunction with and as an augment to the considerable work that has been done at JCVI since 1995. The research at JCVI has undergone significant review at the highest levels of science and government and SGI supports continued review and discussion of this growing area of science. Dr. Venter and the team have met with Congressional members several times since the company's formation to educate them on the field of synthetic genomics. They have also conducted tours and outreach to state and local governments, have made presentations to many governmental agencies, and speak regularly to other groups (lay audiences, scientific groups, media, etc).

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SGI has funded the work at JCVI in exchange for exclusive assignment of intellectual property rights. SGI has filed 13 patent application families on the unique synthetic genomics inventions of the JCVI team. SGI believes that intellectual property is important in the synthetic genomics/biology space as it is one of the best means to ensure that this important area of basic science research will be translated into key commercial products and services for the benefit of society. SGI intends to provide licenses to its synthetic genomics intellectual property.

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#### **About Synthetic Genomics Inc**

SGI, a privately held company founded in 2005, is dedicated to developing and commercializing genomic-driven solutions to address global energy and environment challenges. The company's main research and business programs include: designing advanced biofuels with superior properties compared to ethanol and biodiesel; harnessing photosynthetic organisms to produce value added products directly from sunlight and carbon dioxide; developing new biological solutions to increase production and/or recovery rates of subsurface hydrocarbons and developing high-yielding, more disease resistant and economic feedstocks. For more information please visit [www.syntheticgenomics.com](http://www.syntheticgenomics.com)

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