



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

April 1, 2009

Congressman Collin C. Peterson
2211 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Peterson:

Willmar Municipal Utilities is applying for funding for its Corn Cob/Coal Co-Combustion Implementation Project. This project will facilitate the modification of its existing coal generation station to co-combust the bio-mass fuel of corn cobs in its existing boiler.

Willmar Municipal Utilities plans to install the first full-scale Corn Cob/Coal Co-Combustion Power Generation System in the United States. The project will substitute biomass for approximately 20% of the coal used in the WMU's existing power plant to generate electricity. The energy will be used by WMU's local distribution customers in Willmar, Minnesota. The corn cobs will be grown locally, providing a market for a heretofore unused agricultural product and creating and retaining jobs associated with the production, transportation, and combustion of the corn cobs.

Co-combustion is a proven process, but corn cobs have thus far gone unused for electrical energy generation. WMU believes that one of the most important roles that Congress can play in creating jobs while protecting the environment is to provide funding for renewable energy projects such as this.

Combustion of biomass for electricity is a proven technology. However, full-scale demonstration sites and long-term documentation are not readily available. This project will provide the needed demonstrations and provide valuable support to producers considering the harvest of corn cobs as an additional revenue stream. In addition, the new method of energy production will improve air quality in multiple ways.

Annual grass crops (corn) have been shown to capture and store carbon dioxide. This project's carbon sequestration along with the replacement of coal generated electricity by a renewable energy source is the primary purpose of this project.



To determine the potential to co-combust corn cobs as a renewable fuel with sub bituminous Powder River basin coal, Willmar Municipal Utilities first conducted a research project using locally-grown corn cob material. The project assessed the availability and suitability of corn cobs as bio-fuel via market research and grower interviews, as well as laboratory analysis of local corn cob material for combustion properties, heat production, ash production, and ash properties. The research project included construction of test burn facilities, development and installation of a test burn monitoring system, and development of a corn cob fuel collection and delivery process. The project results were favorable and led to the recommendation for implementation of a full-scale Corn Cob/Coal Co-Combustion demonstration project.

Sincerely,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

Bruce Gomm, P.E.
General Manager

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