R009-C: "Promoting Standardization of Combustion Characteristics for Biofuels"
Submitted by EERC
Principal Investigator: Carolyn Nyberg
Request for $50,000; Total Project Costs $110,000

Technical Advisor Comments

- 1 reviewer recommended do not fund, 1 recommended funding may be considered, and 1 recommended fund.
- Applicant will provide a 55% cash match. Of the $60,000 match, $40,000 will come from a federal source and $20,000 will come from industry: Mesto (NC) – confirmed, EPRI (CA) – not confirmed.
- 2 reviewers felt the management plan was very good.
- Reviewers felt the budget was appropriate.
- While 2 reviewers felt that information on slagging behavior would be beneficial, overall they felt that benefits from this proposed work would be minor. 1 reviewer stated, "…This looks like another case of reinventing the wheel. Perhaps the chief value of this proposal will be as a catalyst to bring the information together more quickly than it otherwise would."
- 1 reviewer commented, "Evidently the EU already has standard methods and the equivalent of SRMs (standard reference methods) available for biomass feedstocks, and yet the applicants fail to provide any details about these resources. At a minimum they should have described what is available, and that a focus of task 1 would be to assess the suitability of these methods for application in the US. How long has the ASABE X564 working group been working on this same issue? This information should have been provided.
    - The applicant provided clarification that "the ASABE X564 working group has been working to compile the standards list since early 2009. There has been some progress and a draft list was discussed at the last annual meeting in Pittsburgh, June 21st. It is unclear at this point when the list will be finalized. Although the efforts of this committee are in line with the objectives of this proposal, it is the intent of the authors of this proposal to utilize the resources of the EERC to help promote this information among the US biomass industry in a more timely manner."
    - The efforts of the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) were not addressed. However, the author states in the abstract that these organizations work to ensure consistency among European countries utilizing biomass fuels. Additionally the applicant states that because European countries have been utilizing biomass for decades, they have established suitable methods for biomass chemical characterization.

Technical Advisor Recommendations

Funding may be considered. It is nice to see 2 great institutions in our state collaborating. This is a strength of the proposal.

This proposal, if successful, would provide a standardization of testing methods for chemical characteristics of biomass. A select group of biomass fuels will be well characterized. Some of them will be native to ND. While the proposal does have industry investment, the companies are not located in ND. The benefits of the proposal seem to be more abstract in nature. It appears that this project would contribute to industry development in ND in an indirect manner. The Council may prefer to fund a project that has greater tangible benefits.

A concern of this proposal is the question of reinventing the wheel. It is understood that the project manager is a member of certain groups that in turn communicates with groups from other countries, and that this can be a great vehicle for spreading awareness. However, it is not clear what has already been done in other countries. It is also not clear why expediency is needed at a cost to ND when this group has already started working on this issue. Especially since the scope of work's benefit seems larger than ND alone.

Suggested contingencies if funded:

- Match from EPRI must be confirmed prior to contract.