



August 30, 2013

North Dakota Industrial Commission  
State Capitol, 14th Floor,  
600 E Boulevard Ave. Dept. 405  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0840

Dear Board Members:

I am writing this letter to express our company's strong interest in collaborating with Dr. Dilpreet Bajwa of North Dakota State University on the project titled - **Commercial Application of Soybean Stalk as a new Alternative Fiber in Low Density Particleboard**. Our company Masonite PrimeBoard Inc. in Wahpeton has been using wheat straw for manufacturing specialized low density particleboard for the past 7 years. In those 7 years the price of wheat straw has doubled, forcing us to investigate locally available biomass alternative feedstocks to remain economically viable. The goal of this project is to qualify soybean straw as an alternative fiber for manufacturing particleboard. The research on this project will be carried jointly by Masonite PrimeBoard Inc. located in Wahpeton and North Dakota State University.

The proof of concept has been validated through preliminary studies conducted by Dr. Bajwa's research group. Last year a preliminary study was conducted at North Dakota State University to understand the potential of different biomass for manufacturing particleboard. Both corn stalks and soybean straw were evaluated in the laboratory for their suitability in manufacturing low density particleboard. Upon testing the physical and mechanical properties of the boards it was found that soybean straw has a strong potential. Our company is now committed to pursue this research for making commercial soybean straw based particleboard at our facility in Wahpeton, ND.

Presently we are seeking support from North Dakota Industrial Commission for the commercialization of this technology. The financial support from NDIC will be used for product formulation development, identifying equipment and processing changes required to process new biomass, conducting pilot and commercial scale trials, process optimization and testing the quality and performance of soybean straw based particleboard.

For the successful outcome of this project our company is willing to invest a total of \$200,400 for this project with cash expenditures in salaries, raw material and equipment of \$109,400 and in-kind expenditures of \$91,000 in production line. We believe this project will create wealth for landowners, agriculture producers to build and maintain a robust economy. We strongly believe the partnership between NDIC, NDSU and Masonite PrimeBoard will help to launch a green and sustainable product made in North Dakota.

Overall this endeavor will support NDIC goals of economic development of ND industry through research, development, marketing and education.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Robinson".

John Robinson  
Plant Manager  
Masonite PrimeBoard Inc.