Minutes of the
RENEWABLE ENERGY COUNCIL
Conference Call
Monday, April 18, 2011 – 1:00 pm (CST)

CALL TO ORDER
Paul Govig, Chairman, called the Renewable Energy Council meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

Members Present: Paul Govig, Rod Holth, Al Christianson, Terry Goerger, and Mark Nisbet.

Members Absent: Eric Mack and Randy Schneider.

Others Present:
Andrea Pfennig, Department of Commerce
Karlene Fine, Industrial Commission
Joleen Leier, Department of Commerce
Josh Spanisowskli, EERC
Carolyn Nyberg, EERC

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
March 24, 2011 meeting minutes were reviewed.

Mark Nisbet moved to approve the minutes as presented. Al Christianson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

WELCOME
Govig welcomed everyone and started introductions.

CONSIDERATION OF GRANT
ROUND 11 APPLICATIONS
Principal Investigator: Jason Laumb; Project Duration: 10 months; Total Project Costs: $693,100; Request for: $325,000.

The Industrial Commission members were concerned that the project involved basic research instead of applied research. The Industrial Commission members requested that the Council visit about this project further.

Govig invited comments from board members.

Christianson referred back to his comments in the last minutes. He feels we need to be very diligent as to what we see as the path to commercialization. He agrees with the Industrial Commission.

Govig asked Spanisowskli if he has a response on how commercial this proposal is or how close to market this is. Response: Potential is really big. Amount of production of biomass is enormous. Research of this nature could help the lignite industry. This could help continue to support some of the efforts of the lignite industry as well as be a very large source for biomass utilization in North Dakota as well.

Govig instructed council members to email votes to Fine.

Discussion of North Dakota Feedstocks for the Standardization of Combustion Characteristics for Biofuels Project
Pfennig gave overview. Nyberg requested the Council’s input on selecting feedstocks that should be utilized for this project.

Nyberg is in the process of selecting feedstocks that would benefit North Dakota.

Switch grass, wheat straw, corn stover, flax straw, beet pulp, and DDGs are being considered at this point.

Goerger asked why switch grass was the only grass listed. Response: That was a suggestion received from NDSU. They are currently working on a biomass project with Sandra Broekema from Great River Energy. Open to another type if it is worthwhile.

Goerger felt she should include the possibility of any types of grasses, not just switch grass. Wants them to be open to the idea of different grasses.
Nyberg feels we need to narrow the samples down, since she is getting to the end of the project. She will keep it in mind.

Ggovig proposed terminology “Switch grass or other acceptable grass.” Nyberg agreed.

Nyberg asked for feedback on flax straw and beet pulp. Nisbet stated beet pulp definitely is in play in his area. Flax is in central and northern North Dakota. Nyberg had that suggestion from Great River Energy as well.

Goerger suggested to check and see if DDGs would be acceptable or not since there are four ethanol plants in the state currently operating.

Nyberg will do a little more research.

Goerger suggested Nyberg contact Wes Plummer at Hankinson Renewable Energy to receive a sample.

Pfennig will email contact information to Nyberg.

Nyberg stated she is slowly getting information and collecting samples. Per her last conversation with NDSU, she was going to get samples from them. She didn’t get a good timeframe on when she was going to get the samples from NDSU. Is there a way she could speed up the process of getting those three samples? Goerger said there probably is corn stover rolled up in bails somewhere outside. Try Lisbon area where livestock producers are. County agents would be able to assist you. Wheat straw plants have straw stacked; Wahpeton has that. You could get beet pulp from American Crystal.

Ggovig instructed to vote “yes” if you want to continue to support this project; “no” if you do not want to continue to support this project.

**Legislative Update**

The conference committee did settle on the Industrial Commission Budget.

The Renewable Energy Council budget was approved for $1.5 million. The Council will have $1.5 million new money for the upcoming biennium, as well as the carryover from the project that recently dropped out.

Fine will send out information once everything is compiled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Rod Holth to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Terry Goerger. Motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 pm.

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**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- None

**COMPLETION OF BALLOTS**

Fund: 2  Do Not Fund: 3