

APPENDIX **H** Sample Dear Neighbor Letter

Dear Neighbor:

Concerns about global climate change and our over-reliance on foreign fuel are creating increased attention for alternatives to fossil fuels—such as solar and wind power, biofuels, and woody biomass. Locally, wood may provide a good alternative to fossil fuels, and just like solar and wind power, wood represents an ongoing source of energy, as long as forests are managed properly and sustainably. Local forests can be managed properly to ensure that harvest rates do not exceed growth rates and that wildlife, soil, and water resources are not negatively affected. In addition, wood is a carbon-neutral source of energy, meaning that it does not raise the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, providing trees are replanted.

There may be opportunities in the Hatchet County area to use wood for local electricity production or to supply a production plant that would convert wood into cellulosic ethanol (a renewable transportation fuel). There are still a number of concerns regarding the use of wood for fuel, including the effects on local forests, the likely increase of truck traffic to deliver the wood, and potential impacts on air quality. These and other issues warrant careful consideration. I believe the residents of Bloomington and Hatchet County can play an important role in this decision-making process by getting involved and participating in the local discussions about energy issues.

I invite you to a community discussion about this topic on Tuesday, December 14th at 6 p.m. at Bloomington Community Center. I'll provide a brief overview of the process of using wood for energy, and then we'll have ample time for questions and discussion. Several local experts from Utopia Energy and State University will join me. I'm excited to hear what you think about the idea of using our plentiful wood resources for sustainable energy, so I hope you can attend. Please feel free to contact me at (123) 653-2947 if you have questions or want more information.

Sincerely,
Dave Patterson
Hatchet County RC&D Council

