

October 31, 2006

Susan LeVan-Green
Forest Products Laboratory
USDA-Forest Service
One Gifford Pinchot Drive
Madison, WI 53726-2398

Re. Mountain Parks Electric Incorporated Application for Woody Biomass Grant

Dear Ms. LeVan-Green:

I urge you to support an application submitted by partners Mountain Parks Electric Inc. (MPEI), Community Energy Systems and Pittington Logging and Sawmill in Walden, Colorado, for funds through the 2007 Woody Biomass Grant Program. With these funds, this partnership hopes to develop a combined heat and power facility in the town of Walden to reduce wildfire hazards, improve forest health, and provide new economic opportunities for rural Jackson County.

I recently learned of this project when I visited Walden and toured the existing thermal biomass facility at the town's high school. This region of Colorado is the epicenter of one of the most significant outbreaks of pine beetle kill in recent memory. With nearly 85% of the surrounding forest dead or dying, the communities of Jackson County are burdened with a large volume of hazardous fuels near homes and community buildings. With Woody Biomass funds, MPEI, with their partners Community Energy Systems and Pittington Logging and Sawmill, hopes to expand their capacity to generate both heat and electricity for rural Jackson County through development and utilization of a 2 to 4 megawatt gasification system. I understand that this facility could potentially utilize 35 to 40,000 tons of material a year, treating 3 to 4,000 acres of hazardous fuels annually. This project would also serve as an excellent economic stimulus for one of the most remote regions of my state.

I strongly urge you to support this proposal. This proposal is a product of a unique partnership which is well qualified to bring an innovative biomass facility to Jackson County.

Please keep my office informed of any developments with this proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar
United States Senator