FACT SHEET

ADVANCING RENEWABLE ENERGY

From wind to biomass to solar, renewable resources can have significant environmental benefits by producing clean energy. To reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil and better protect our environment, the League works to identify and promote new sources of renewable energy that are on the cutting edge of current technology. We also push for electric utilities to produce more energy from renewable sources.

NEW SOURCES

Since the 1990s, the League has been promoting the development of wind energy in the upper Midwest—a region that has been called the "Saudi Arabia of wind power" because of its vast windswept plains. We have taught landowners how to evaluate their wind resources and about contractual issues they should consider when approached by wind developers. We also work to increase government incentives for the research, development, and utilization of wind energy, including state and national tax credits.

The League is also working to promote the development of bioenergy. In Minnesota, we are helping to create a program that encourages farmers to grow perennial crops (such as diverse native prairie grasses) under long-term easements. These crops can be converted to biofuel such as ethanol. The agreement requires best management practices that limit use of pesticides and fertilizers and promote the most productive energy crops with the greatest benefit to water quality, carbon storage, and wildlife. The concept is already regarded as a national model for promoting energy crops that are environmentally sustainable.

EXISTING SOURCES

Part of the League's renewable energy strategy in the upper Midwest is getting existing utilities to increase the amount of renewable energy they provide to consumers. Our work has led to some of the most progressive renewable energy policies in the nation. Thanks in large part to the League's efforts, Minnesota requires its utilities to obtain one-fourth of their energy from renewable sources, such as wind and solar, by 2025. This new standard is expected to result in the installation of thousands of new wind turbines. In addition, the League led efforts to establish a Midwest Renewable Energy Tracking System to keep the costs of producing renewable energy down by encouraging production at the best locations in the region.

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