Section IV: Wrapping Up

Considering Using Wood for Energy: A Role Play

SUMMARY

In this role play activity, students participate in a mock town-hall meeting where community leaders are seeking input on using wood for energy. Students play the roles of stakeholders and community leaders to examine various perspectives, concerns, and questions in the local community. This activity can serve as a culminating exercise for this unit.

SUBJECTS

Language Arts, Science, Social Studies

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Who are the stakeholders involved in woody biomass energy projects?
2. What are some of the various stakeholder perspectives regarding the use of wood for energy?
3. What factors should a community consider when making decisions about the use of wood for energy?

OBJECTIVES

1. Use persuasion techniques to present clear arguments in support of or opposition to a particular position on an issue (LA.1112.5.2.2; LA.1125.2.3).
2. Compile research and organize information to support stakeholder claims and positions (LA.1112.5.2.5).
3. Evaluate various stakeholder perspectives regarding using wood for energy (SS.912.C.2.4; SS.912.E.2.2).
4. Examine advantages and disadvantages of using wood for energy (SC.912.N.4.2).

MATERIALS

- Copies of Student Handout and Summary Worksheet (one copy of each per student)
- Copies of Role Cards
- Computers with Internet access for group research
- Flipchart paper or poster board
- Markers
- Stop watch or clock

TIME ESTIMATE

Part I: 1 hour
Part II: 1 hour
Teacher Instructions

Assessments

OBJECTIVE 1:
Assess groups’ abilities to present succinct position statements and claims as they present opening statements and ask/answer questions during the question and comment period. Rubrics are provided below for Stakeholder Group Presentations and the Community Leader Group to assist you in assessing group work. In addition, ensure that every student speaks at least once during the role play and that students follow role play guidelines and demonstrate appropriate listening skills.

OBJECTIVE 2:
Ask students to submit research summaries on their stakeholder roles for assessment. Students should cite three or more information sources and summarize relevant information that supports their stakeholders’ claim and position.

OBJECTIVE 3:
During role play activity, assess groups’ abilities to address and consider varying perspectives and ask questions related to other positions during the question and comment period. In addition, review student answers to Summary Worksheet, Question 5.

OBJECTIVE 4:
Engage students in considering advantages and disadvantages and costs and benefits during the discussion. Ask students to write a brief, one-page essay outlining what they think are some of the most critical advantages and disadvantages of using wood for energy in their own community. Also, review answers to Summary Worksheet, Question 6.

Preparation

1. Review the Common Concerns fact sheet in the Supplemental Reading section to learn more about some of the issues and concerns related to using wood for energy. Make copies of this fact sheet if you plan to assign student reading before this activity.
2. Review the Role Cards and Student Handout to become familiar with the town-hall meeting scenario and the stakeholder roles.
3. This role play contains 12 Role Cards. Divide your class into groups of two or three students for each stakeholder role. In addition, choose two to four students to represent the community leaders. Assign this role to students who have good listening skills and ability to succinctly summarize a large amount of information.
4. Make copies of Student Handout, Student Worksheet, and Role Cards.

Procedure

Part I: Research and Role Play Preparation

1. Give each student a copy of the Student Handout and each stakeholder group member a copy of his or her assigned Role Card.
2. Go over the Introduction, Scenario, and Instructions found on the Student Handout with your class.
3. Provide time for the groups to read the Student Handout and Role Cards to become familiar with the issue, the process of the town-hall meeting, and the roles they will play.
4. Take groups to the library to conduct research related to their roles.
   - Stakeholder Groups: If students have access to the Internet, they can start their research by going to the Web sites provided on the Role Card. Groups should find information and data to support their claims and positions, write a short research summary (one to two paragraphs), and record all of the information sources they used. A minimum of three information sources is required. If needed, groups can finish the research for homework.
   - Community Leader Group: While stakeholder groups conduct research, the community leaders group should read all Role Cards to become familiar with the stakeholder positions. In addition, each community leader should prepare two questions or comments for each stakeholder group and two questions or comments that could be asked of any stakeholder.

Part II: Town-Hall Meeting

1. Before students arrive, organize desks and chairs into 12 groups, with one group at the front of the class for the community leaders. Make sure that all groups will be able to see one another and easily communicate during the meeting.
2. Go over the role play guidelines: respect one another; do not interrupt other meeting participants; and wait for recognition before speaking. Each student is required to speak at least once during the meeting. Also, encourage students to be creative and have fun playing their roles!
3. Before the role play begins, provide 15 minutes for groups to prepare for the town-hall meeting. During this time, groups should complete the following tasks:
   a. Make a name placard for the stakeholder group.
   b. Stakeholder Groups: Prepare opening statements and counterpoints, and decide who will present the opening statement and who will speak during the question and comment period.
   c. Community Leaders Group: Prepare the introduction and organize the list of questions for the stakeholder groups. As a group, the community leaders have 2 minutes to welcome stakeholders, introduce themselves, and explain the purpose of the meeting.
4. Instruct the Community Leaders Group to open the town-hall meeting by providing a general introduction.

5. Moving in a clockwise direction from the community leaders, each stakeholder group presents a 2-minute opening statement.

6. After all groups have presented opening statements, the community leaders lead a 20-minute question and comment period. Community leaders can address questions and comments to a specific stakeholder group or to all stakeholders. Stakeholder groups can respond to one another’s comments and responses when recognized to speak by the community leaders.

7. At the conclusion of the question and answer period, community leaders have a 5-minute meeting to discuss their recommendation. The recommendation should include areas of agreement among stakeholders along with what questions or considerations are important regarding the proposed wood to energy facility.

8. Finally, community leaders have 3 minutes to explain their recommendation to the stakeholders and conclude the town-hall meeting.

9. After the role play, use the following questions to guide a 15-minute class discussion.
   a. Why do stakeholders have different perspectives about using wood for energy?

   Answers will vary but may include the following: Stakeholders’ perspectives are shaped by many things, including beliefs, values, or the need to do what is best for the company or industry they are affiliated with.

   b. What environmental factors or considerations were brought up at the meeting? (These can be both positive and negative factors.)

   Answers will vary.
   • Positive factors: Using woody biomass for energy can help preserve our forested areas, preventing them being sold for development; using woody biomass for energy reduces air emissions that contribute to global warming.
   • Negative factors: Concerns about how using woody biomass may affect local forests and deforestation; concerns related to impacts on local air and water quality.

   c. What economic factors or considerations were brought up during the meeting? (These can be both positive and negative factors.)

   Answers will vary.
   • Positive factors: A wood to energy facility could bring new jobs to the community and because the woody biomass would come from local forests, it could increase income flow within the community.
   • Negative factors: A wood to energy facility would require a complete retrofitting of existing power plants, placing a burden on the community’s economy.

   d. What social factors (including public health and safety, community values, employment, livable wages) were brought up during the meeting? (These can be both positive and negative factors.)

   • Positive factors: A wood to energy facility could bring new jobs to the community and because the woody biomass would come from local forests, it could increase income flow within the community.
   • Negative factors: A wood to energy facility would require a complete retrofitting of existing power plants, placing a burden on the community’s economy.
e. Which stakeholders would benefit from a wood to energy facility? Which stakeholders would be negatively impacted?

*Answers will vary depending on the portrayal of stakeholder perspectives during the town-hall meeting.*

f. Did the community leaders’ recommendation leave out any stakeholder perspectives? If so, who?

*Answers will vary depending on the portrayal of stakeholder perspectives during the town-hall meeting. Encourage students to think about all the perspectives presented and whether these were taken into consideration in the community leaders’ recommendation. Ask stakeholder groups to think about how their group felt when the recommendation was given.*

g. Did you connect or identify with any of the stakeholder perspectives? Which ones?

*Answers will vary. Ask students to share their personal perspectives on the issue and to think about how these may be similar to stakeholder perspectives.*

h. Do you personally think that using wood for energy in your community is a good option? Why or why not?

*Answers will vary. Ask students to share their personal perspectives and provide reasoning to support their positions.*

10. Have students complete the *Student Worksheet* for homework or in class if time permits. This helps students synthesize what they learned during this activity.

*Note: You can shorten or lengthen the suggested times for this activity, depending on your needs. To shorten the activity, use fewer Role Cards and have more students play each role, remove the individual research component, or have students come prepared to start the role play instead of providing in-class preparation time. If your students are interested and you are able to provide more time, you can lengthen the suggested times for the various activities so students can do more research and preparation, and have more time for opening statements as well as the question and comment period.*

**Resources**

- Sustainable Forestry for Bioenergy and Bio-based Products fact sheets available: [http://forestbioenergy.net/training-materials](http://forestbioenergy.net/training-materials)
## Stakeholder Group Presentation Rubric:
**Considering Using Wood for Energy: A Role Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>4 Above Standards</th>
<th>3 Meets Standards</th>
<th>2 Approaching Standards</th>
<th>1 Below Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparedness</td>
<td>Group is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.</td>
<td>Group seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.</td>
<td>Group is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.</td>
<td>Group does not seem at all prepared to present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Group shows a full understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Group shows a good understanding of the topic.</td>
<td>Group shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.</td>
<td>Group does not seem to understand the topic very well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Community Leader Group Rubric:
**Considering Using Wood for Energy: A Role Play**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>4 Above Standards</th>
<th>3 Meets Standards</th>
<th>2 Approaching Standards</th>
<th>1 Below Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Group does an excellent job at leading town-hall meeting and is obviously prepared.</td>
<td>Group is fairly well prepared and does a good job at leading town-hall meeting.</td>
<td>Group seems somewhat prepared but town-hall meeting was lacking organization or direction.</td>
<td>Group seems completely unprepared and does not do a good job in the leadership role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
<td>Group is unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation</td>
<td>The recommendation offered is very thorough and incorporates all stakeholder perspectives presented.</td>
<td>The recommendation offered is somewhat thorough and incorporates several stakeholder perspectives presented.</td>
<td>The recommendation is fairly brief and only incorporates one or two stakeholder perspectives presented.</td>
<td>The recommendation is fairly brief and does not incorporate any stakeholder perspectives presented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Town-hall meetings offer community leaders the opportunity to incorporate the ideas and concerns of the public into the decision-making process.

INTRODUCTION

Making decisions about local energy sources is a complex process. When members of a community recognize the need to produce additional electricity, they have to make decisions about which sources of energy will be used. How a community chooses to produce electricity affects land use, public health, the economy, the environment, and the global climate. Collecting accurate information about the advantages and disadvantages of a specific energy source and the overall impacts on the local community requires in-depth investigation. Communities have to consider all feasible options for energy sources and make the most appropriate choice.

One of the first steps for determining which energy sources should be considered might be to bring together people who have an interest in or are affected by energy decisions. These individuals and groups are often called stakeholders because they have a “stake” in the decision that is being made. For example, the stakeholders in the decision of whether to use wood for energy include forest landowners, timber business owners, natural resource professionals, economic development representatives and consultants, utility companies, energy interest groups, environmental interest groups, and the general public. Their viewpoints may be influenced by personal opinions, beliefs or values, or ideas about what is best. If stakeholders are able to agree on which solutions to consider, they may be more willing to continue to ask questions, search for answers, and be involved in future discussions.

A town-hall meeting is one method that community leaders can use to gain input from issue stakeholders. In general, town-hall meetings share a similar purpose: they are an informal way for communities to get together and discuss an issue. Community members and stakeholder groups are invited to share their positions on the issue, voice concerns, ask questions, and listen to responses from community leaders. Town-hall meetings offer community leaders the opportunity to incorporate the ideas and concerns of the public into the decision-making process.
TOWN-HALL MEETING SCENARIO

In coordination with national efforts to utilize more renewable energy sources, the community of Pine Ridge is looking into locally feasible renewable energy sources. Community leaders have recently learned that some areas in the southeastern U.S. are using locally available woody biomass resources to help meet energy demands. Community leaders are interested in exploring whether woody biomass could be a feasible, locally available energy source. Before making decisions about whether to develop a wood to energy facility proposal, community leaders want to learn about local stakeholders’ perspectives on the issue.

A town-hall meeting is being held for community leaders to seek input regarding a woody biomass energy facility. Several stakeholder groups will be present at the meeting representing various environmental, economic, and social interests. These stakeholder groups are:

- natural resource professionals,
- forest landowners,
- pulp mill owners,
- fossil fuel representatives,
- renewable energy representatives,
- utility company representatives,
- economic development council representatives,
- woody biomass economic consultants,
- Protect Our Environment members,
- citizens against biomass, and
- citizens for biomass.

During the meeting, each stakeholder group will have the opportunity to voice perspectives on the issue and discuss positions. Then, community leaders will guide a question and comment period. At the conclusion of the meeting, community leaders will prepare a recommendation concerning the proposal for a woody biomass energy facility. This recommendation will include points of agreement as well as questions and considerations from each stakeholder group.

Instructions

**Before the Role Play**

Your *Role Card* provides basic information about the stakeholder role you will play during the town-hall meeting. Begin by reading and discussing your *Role Card* to gain an understanding of your group’s perspective.

- If you are a **stakeholder**, you will have the opportunity as a group to conduct research at the library or on the Internet to find additional information and data to support your claims and perspectives. If the Internet is available, use the Web sites suggested on the *Role Card* as a starting point for your research. Your group will turn in a short research summary (one to two paragraphs) and a list of the information sources you used. A minimum of three information sources is required. During the town-hall meeting, you can use the research summary and the information on the *Role Card* to express viewpoints, share information, and respond to questions and comments.

- If you are a **community leader**, your responsibility is to become familiar with the stakeholder groups by reading all the *Role Cards*. You also need to prepare two questions or comments for each stakeholder group and two questions or comments that could be asked of any stakeholder group. Your group will turn in a list of questions and comments.
During the Role Play

Your group will have 15 minutes in class before the role play to prepare. Make a placard with the name of your group to place at your table before the meeting begins.

- If you are a member of a stakeholder group, you should prepare opening statements, and take notes on specific “talking points” that you want to bring up during the meeting. Remember, you are trying to get community leaders to understand your point of view, but you do not have much time to explain yourself. Consider what other stakeholders will say during the meeting and be prepared to counter their remarks. You should also decide who will speak during the opening statement and the question and comment period. Remember that every group member must speak at least once!
- If you are a member of the community leader group, you should prepare the 2-minute introduction (welcome attendees, introduce yourselves, and explain the purpose of the meeting). In addition, you should prioritize the possible list of questions and comments. Decide who will speak during the introduction and recommendation/conclusion and who will be responsible for the moderator tasks (enforcing time limits and recognizing speakers).

Role Play Guidelines

Throughout the role play activity, use following guidelines:

- Each student should speak at least once during the town-hall meeting.
- Show respect for all other town-hall meeting participants.
- Wait to be acknowledged before speaking.
- Allow others to speak without interruption.
- Be creative, and have fun playing your role!

Role Play Procedure

1. The community leaders open the town-hall meeting with a 2-minute introduction.
2. Next, moving in a clockwise direction from the community leaders, each stakeholder group has 2 minutes to introduce themselves and give opening statements.
3. After all groups have presented opening statements, the community leaders lead a question and comment period for 20 minutes. Community leaders can address questions and comments to a specific stakeholder group or to all stakeholders. Stakeholder groups can ask questions and respond to one another’s comments and responses when recognized by the community leader group. During this time, raise your hand if you want to speak, wait to be recognized by the community leader group, and do not interrupt other speakers until you are called on.
4. Community leaders have a 5-minute meeting to discuss their proposed recommendation.
5. To conclude the meeting, community leaders have 3 minutes to explain their recommendation to the stakeholders.
6. Following the role play, there will be a class discussion to summarize what you learned from this activity.
You are an elected official in your community. Since you represent the public, it is important to seek public input when making decisions. You know that the decision to use wood for energy is an issue with many perspectives and that it has multiple impacts—some positive, some negative. Your decision will affect the environment, land use, jobs, energy prices, and the quality of life of local citizens. During the town-hall meeting, you must listen carefully and take good notes. Even though the stakeholders may not all agree, your job is to look for common ground. Are there areas where most people agree? Find and use areas of agreement as a starting point for your final recommendation. Summarize the important questions, factors, and considerations that need to be taken into account in the decision-making process for your recommendation.

Read ALL the Role Cards to become familiar with stakeholder perspectives. Prepare a 2-minute introduction for the town-hall meeting. In addition, prepare two questions or comments for each group and two questions or comments that could be asked of any stakeholder group.

You are a land manager who practices sustainable forest management on public lands to grow and harvest wood. You have also been involved in programs and certifications that help provide private family forest landowners with information and tools to implement sustainable practices. You can advise community leaders about forest sustainability through your experiences and expertise. You believe that sustainable forest management can provide wood products, environmental services (such as watershed protection and wildlife habitat), and social services (such as aesthetics and recreation). You believe that forests can and should be managed to lessen negative environmental impacts, increase long-term production yields, and conserve natural areas. A woody biomass facility should not accept any and all woody biomass materials, but instead, should specify that it will accept only sustainably produced woody biomass resources to guarantee a healthy and sustainable future for local forests—forests that future generations can enjoy and depend on for resources, jobs, and community income.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations: http://www.fao.org/forestry/sfm/en/ (click on “What is SFM?”) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative: http://www.sfiprogram.org/

You own a pulp mill that is located near the city or town that is considering using wood for energy. You are familiar with using wood for energy; your pulp mill has been using wood waste from wood processing to generate power to run the machinery at your mill for many years. Your business has experienced difficulties in the past years, as it has become harder for you to compete with international pulpwood markets. You are worried that using local wood products for energy will make it even more difficult for you to buy lumber resources to produce pulp. If there is more demand for wood, wood prices could rise. Any additional money you spend on wood affects your profits. In addition, your business benefits the local community by providing jobs and income to the area.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web site: American Forest and Paper Association: http://www.afandpa.org/
Forest Landowner

You own 500 acres of forested land just outside of the city. The land is maintained as a planted pine plantation, meaning it is used to grow pine trees to produce pulp and timber products. However, the pulp wood market in the U.S. is declining and building construction has slowed due to the sagging economy. You have been approached by several land developers who are interested in buying your land. You would like to continue maintaining your land as forest, but you need a market for your wood. Using wood for energy is very appealing because it can create a new market for wood resources, which may help you keep your land and continue to make profits. However, you are concerned about the security of wood product markets and want to make sure that any money you invest in new equipment or supplies will be a wise, worthwhile, long-term investment.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Family Forest Landowner: http://www.woodlandowners.org/ and SFRP Fact sheet 6.5: http://www.forestbioenergy.net/training-materials/fact-sheets/module-6-fact-sheets/

Fossil Fuel Representative

You are a member of an association that represents the interests of the fossil fuel industry. You advocate the use of domestic coal and natural gas as clean, abundant, inexpensive, and secure energy sources for the U.S. You believe that fossil fuels are readily available and argue that the infrastructure (such as energy facilities, technologies, and transportation systems) to use these fuels are already in place, unlike the infrastructure for renewable energy sources, which is lagging behind. You believe that in the coming decades, renewable energy sources will only make a minor contribution to the national energy supply and that it is necessary to continue using fossil fuel resources to meet growing demand. In addition, the technologies used to generate electricity from coal and natural gas continue to improve so that air emissions from fossil fuels can be reduced. Relying more on resources that are domestically available could also provide national energy security and jobs and income to support the economy. You would like to see the community use more domestic coal or natural gas to meet growing energy demands.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: American Coal Council: http://www.clean-coal.info/drupal/index.php and Independent Petroleum Association of America: http://www.ipaa.org/

Renewable Energy Representative

You represent an association that advocates the use of renewable sources of energy. You believe communities need to make responsible energy decisions by utilizing more local, clean, renewable sources of energy. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting safe, healthy, clean communities is a priority for your association. You believe communities should consider all possible renewable energy options and decide how they can begin to make changes to their current energy system. Using wood for energy is an option for communities that have an adequate supply of locally available woody biomass. If the community does not want to consider a wood-fueled power plant, then woody biomass could be used at a school, hospital, or industry to generate electricity or power. In addition, coal-powered facilities can combine wood with coal to reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions. You know woody biomass won’t be able to meet all growing energy needs, but it could be used in combination with other renewable energy resources.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Southern Alliance for Clean Energy: http://www.cleanenergy.org/ and Florida Energy Producers: http://www.floridaenergyproducers.com/
Utility Company Representative

You are the manager of the local utility plant. Currently, the facilities you manage burn fossil fuels to produce electricity. Research has shown that energy demands in your region are expected to continue to increase and additional electricity will be needed within the foreseeable future. Growing populations, increasing development, and increasing numbers of appliances in average households contributes to increases in electricity demand. You want to keep energy prices low for consumers. You also want to increase the amount of energy produced from renewable energy sources. If enough woody biomass is locally available, it could represent a feasible energy source. However, a reliable, long-term, sustainable woody biomass supply is important. You also recognize it could be a hassle for your community to utilize a new energy source. It will take time and money to set up a new system to transport, store, and process woody biomass.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Edison Electric Institute: http://www.eei.org/ and http://www.getenergyactive.org/ and your local utility’s Web site.

Economic Development Council

You work for the regional economic development council. Opportunities for community development and economic growth are important to you. You want any changes to the energy system to have positive effects on the well-being and quality of life for your community. The energy sources used should create meaningful jobs, support personal incomes, and increase the community’s tax base. Construction costs of a new energy facility, the number of jobs created, and pay rates should be key factors in the decision-making process. On average in the southeastern U.S., a new 20-megawatt wood to energy facility costs about $48.7 million and generates about 101 jobs in the region. A new 40-megawatt wood to energy facility costs about $86.8 million and generates about 159 jobs. If your community is going to consider using wood for energy, you recommend a full economic impact analysis be prepared to ensure it is for the good of the community’s economy.

To begin your research for this role, locate a Web site for economic development in your region. Conduct an internet search using your county name and economic development. Also, go to Interface South: http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass/fact_sheets.html and look for the Economic Impacts of Generating Electricity Fact Sheet for more information.

Woody Biomass Economic Consultant

You research the economic availability of woody biomass. You help communities determine how much and what types of woody biomass resources are available and at what cost. Cost depends on how far the woody biomass is transported, how much is needed, and the quality of the woody biomass resources. You also research the local economic impact of using wood for energy. This includes how many jobs will be created, how much the facility construction and operation will cost, and how much money the facility will bring to the economy. While woody biomass energy facilities are a financial investment, they also bring benefits such as new markets for landowners to sell wood, new local jobs, and increased monetary flow in the community.

To begin researching your role, go to the Interface South Web site: http://www.interfacesouth.org/woodybiomass/fact_sheets.html and look for Economic Impacts of Generating Electricity Fact Sheet and Community Economic Profile: Florida.
Protect Our Environment

You are a member of an environmental organization that does not support using wood for energy. Protect Our Environment is dedicated to the protection of forests and believes that there is already enough pressure on forests from the timber and pulpwood industries. Increased demand for wood resources could lead to the conversion of natural forests to planted tree plantations. This could result in the loss of natural forests and wildlife habitats. You believe that, over time, using woody biomass for energy will negatively affect the environment through undesirable land-use changes, reduced soil fertility, and degraded wildlife habitats. You believe that using forests to supply energy is a recipe for massive forest devastation and is not a sustainable energy solution. You insist a full assessment of the anticipated environment impacts be prepared and that strong regulations on forest management and harvesting quotas should also be put in place.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Sierra Club: http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/biomass.asp and Dogwood Alliance: http://www.dogwoodalliance.org/

Citizens Against Biomass

As a concerned citizen, you are reluctant to support the use of woody biomass as an energy source. You feel that you already pay enough for electricity, and you are concerned about possible electricity price increases. You believe that generating more electricity will lead to increasing development. You believe that your community should implement and encourage energy conservation efforts instead of producing additional electricity. Over the past few years, you have seen an increase in truck traffic as increased development brings new stores and businesses. The last thing you want to see is more semi-trailers on local roads. You want to ensure that noise and air pollution from logging trucks and public safety are considered in this decision. You are also concerned with how this energy source will impact local air quality and nearby forests. You don’t trust the energy or forest industry to keep their promises. You worry that using woody biomass could be “too” successful, and the community could end up destroying its forests.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web site: Concerned Citizens of Russell: http://www.concernedcitizensofrussell.org/index.php

Citizens For Biomass

You are excited and curious about the possibility of using wood for energy. You believe that a woody biomass energy facility will benefit your community by providing an alternative, clean source of energy. You want your community to be a leader in renewable energy initiatives. You insist that continuing to rely on fossil fuels will not provide a sustainable energy source for the future. You also view using wood for energy as an opportunity to utilize resources that are often regarded as having little value—urban waste wood and logging residues. Since wood is a local resource, the money paid to wood growers, collectors, and transporters will stay in the local economy. You believe a woody biomass energy facility will stimulate the local economy by providing jobs and generating tax revenue. Overall, you support wood for energy.

To begin researching your role, go to the following Web sites: Burlington Electric Department: https://www.burlingtonelectric.com/page.php?pid=75&name=mcneil and U.S. Forest Service: http://www.fs.fed.us/woodybiomass/benefits.shtml
Complete this worksheet for homework after you’ve finished the town-hall meeting role play.

1. Briefly summarize the purpose of the town-hall meeting.

2. Why is citizen participation in energy decisions important?

3. List the different stakeholder perspectives presented at the town-hall meeting.

4. Briefly describe the group you were a member of and the perspective presented by your group.

5. Was your perspective included in the community leader groups’ recommendation? Explain your answer.

6. Explain some of the potential advantages and disadvantages of using wood for energy that were expressed by the stakeholder groups.