



Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

March 6, 2023

RE: Support for HF1973, the Next Generation Climate Act

Dear Rep. Acomb and Members of the House Climate and Energy Finance & Policy Committee

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate supports the Next Generation Climate Act (HF1973) to update the 2007 Next Generation Energy Act (NGEA) greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals. This policy provides a framework for taking the steps necessary to reduce climate pollution that is creating a public health crisis.

The Next Generation Climate Act aligns Minnesota's GHG reduction targets with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recommendations to prevent global warming that exceeds 1.5°C (2.7°F) above pre-industrial levels and with Minnesota's Climate Action Framework. Globally we must achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 to avert the worst effects of climate change, which will fall heavily on socially vulnerable communities such as those living in poverty and agricultural communities. Health outcomes stemming from increases above 1.5°C include increases in heat and air pollution-related morbidity and mortality, as well as increases in vector-borne disease.¹

This bill puts Minnesota on a zero-carbon path to do our part in fighting climate change and protecting human health. The hottest ten years on record have occurred in the last twenty years. Our increasingly destabilizing climate has brought weather catastrophes including high heat days, droughts and flooding, and damaging wind storms. As health professionals we are seeing more sickness, death, and adverse birth outcomes due to exposure to high heat and air pollution;² more disease related to mold and allergies; more deaths and morbidity in populations with pre-existing heart and lung disease; increases in asthma attacks in children and adults; increases in infectious diseases transmitted by ticks and mosquitoes; and adverse effects on mental health.³

Every year without action only increases the urgency to move swiftly on all efforts to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels for electricity, transportation, agriculture, infrastructure, and industry. Updating Minnesota's GHG emission goals is critical to reducing the downstream health effects of carbon pollution for Minnesotans and is an important step toward improving public health, with the extra benefit of cost savings in both energy use and health care. Thank you for your leadership in introducing this critical policy update.

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¹ IPCC, Special Report Global Warming of 1.5°C, Summary for Policymakers. <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/spm/>

² Bekkar B, Pacheco S, Basu R, DeNicola N. [Association of air pollution and heat exposure with preterm birth, low birth weight, and stillbirth in the US](#). JAMA Network Open. 2020;3(6).

³ U.S. Global Change Research Program. The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment. <https://health2016.globalchange.gov>

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC) is a multidisciplinary network of over 500 Minnesota health professionals working to protect and improve human health by promoting climate health. hpforhc.org