



**CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA**

Thursday, January 21, 2021

RE: House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy—100% Clean Energy Standard

Dear Chair Long and Representatives,

Just 24 hours after a historic day in the national capital, today represents a (virtually) historic day in the Minnesota capitol with the hearing of the 100% Clean Energy Standard. Conservation Minnesota applauds Chair Long for the immense work he has put into refining and improving this bill. We are also thankful Governor Walz has agreed to make this bill a pillar of his goal to get Minnesota on a path to 100% carbon free energy as soon as it's reliable, affordable and equitable.

I would like to point out two parts of the bill that may not receive as much attention as the "100%" headline—but I feel are vital in the clean energy revolution that is already underway.

The more we learn about air pollution, particularly the cumulative impacts of air pollution, the more we recognize that air pollution does not impact all Minnesotans equally. Governor Walz has directed state agencies like the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to make the principle of environmental justice rooted in all the decisions the agencies make. However, we have not seen that same intentional direction at the Public Utilities Commission because state statutes do not demand it. The 100% Clean Energy Standard takes the necessary next steps in directing the Commission to ensure that statewide air pollution emissions are reduced, particularly in areas of concern for environmental justice. This is an important step in cleaning up air pollution in Minnesota communities, particularly in communities already overburdened by air pollution.

The second part of the 100% Clean Energy Standard that we would like to highlight is recognizing the opportunity that Minnesota communities and workers have to benefit from the expanding clean energy economy. Not only does this bill highlight the need for the Commission to consider the high-quality jobs that the clean energy economy can bring to Minnesota workers and families, it also allows the Commission to require family sustaining jobs that pay prevailing wage rates. This will help not only the bottom line of workers building our transition to the clean energy economy, but it will also help the communities where those workers live. And speaking of communities, this bill directs the Commission to encourage locating new energy facilities

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in communities where fossil fuel plants are closing. This is a vital next step on the path to 100% carbon free energy so that some Minnesota communities are not left behind by the clean energy revolution.

Thank you for allowing me to share this written testimony today.

Sincerely,
Nels Paulsen