

January 30, 2023

Dear members of the House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee,

My name is Matt Johnson, AIA, and I'm writing on behalf of the American Institute of Architects Minnesota. On behalf of the 2,300 architects and design professionals who are members of AIA Minnesota, I am writing in support of House File 597, which creates a climate action grant program for cities.

It will take contributions from state and local government, as well as the private sector, to stem the tide of climate impacts and keep our citizens healthy and our buildings performing at optimal levels. Programs like the one proposed in this bill are an important tool to have in the toolbox.

In addition to my architecture career, I am a member of the Savage City Council. I see on a regular basis that there are many opportunities within city operations to make change that can impact our carbon footprint. What most often prevents us from taking action where these opportunities exist is a lack of funding. A grant program like this one can be a springboard to cities having more resources to make changes in our buildings, our infrastructure, and on other elements of our operations.

To put this bill in a real-life context, the City of Savage just completed a fleet electrification study with Xcel Energy. Of the 16 vehicles that were studied, 11 were found to not be cost-effective to transition to electric. One of the obstacles is our need for additional charging stations. A bill such as this will provide us with the means to take this first step and install the charging stations to electrify these 11 vehicles, saving 1,094,804 LBS of greenhouse gas emissions and grow the electric vehicle charging infrastructure within our community.

These grants may not seem like a lot of money, but every step we take is a step in the right direction, and cities like mine have an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in change-making. Please pass this bill to help cities lead the charge on climate action.

Sincerely,



Matt Johnson, AIA
Architecture Group Leader, ISG
Council Member, City of Savage

Cc: Representative Larry Kraft