



Chair Swedzinski and Members of the House Energy Committee:

MCEA is a nonprofit public interest law firm and advocacy organization with a 50-year history of defending Minnesota's environment and the health of its people. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HF 249 (Igo). **MCEA opposes this bill because it would change the definition of "carbon free" to hinge on the percentage of revenue generated by burning biomass, rather than whether it emits carbon dioxide.**

One of the strengths of the 100% carbon-free electricity standard is that it is technology-neutral in statute. If passed, HF 249 would create a technology and utility-specific carve out that would invite further efforts to undermine the technology-neutral language in statute. Using the same approach as HF 249, any electricity generating technology could be included, even coal or gas.

There can be no question that burning wood and other biomass emits carbon dioxide. We cannot log our way out of the climate crisis. Research shows that burning biomass actually emits more carbon dioxide and climate pollution than burning coal to create the same amount of electricity.

Lastly, tying the definition of "carbon free" to the portion of revenue of a specific utility invites gaming the definition. For example, a biomass plant could be sold or spun off as a way of gaining access to the change in the "carbon free" definition, or a new utility could be formed with the intent of accessing this change. In either case, that kind of change would have nothing to do with whether the plant emits carbon dioxide but could determine if Minnesota statute defines it as "carbon free."

HF 249 would create a loophole in Minnesota's 100% carbon-free electricity standard. MCEA recommends that the House Energy Committee reject it and focus on solutions to climate pollution that support Minnesota's 100% standard, rather than create loopholes that undermine it.

Sincerely,

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