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Minnesota House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee
563 Minnesota State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hornstein and Committee Members,

My name is MK Anderson and I am writing today on behalf of Fresh Energy. Fresh Energy is a 30-year-old, Minnesota based non-partisan, non-profit organization that is working to achieve equitable, carbon-neutral economies by 2050. We appreciate the opportunity to write to you regarding House File 2677.

Fresh Energy supports House File 2677 requiring the Metropolitan Council (Met Council) to create a climate action plan as part of their comprehensive planning process.

In Minnesota, we are already witnessing the effects of climate change in our communities, ecosystems, and economy. In 2019, Governor Tim Walz issued Executive Order 19-37 to “address the size and scope of the climate crisis, rally the resources of state government and push the state forward on climate action.” This Executive Order describes the existential threat of climate change to all Minnesotans. It also discusses the fact that significant disparities exist in our state and that these disparities mean that some communities bear a disproportionate burden of climate risks and the negative impacts of climate change.

The order also established the Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor’s Climate Change Advisory Council.¹ In 2022, the Climate Change Subcabinet released the State’s Climate Action Framework. This framework sets the target of reaching net-zero carbon emissions statewide by 2050.²

The impacts and effects of climate change emissions are not felt equally throughout our state. Across the Twin Cities metro area, this disparity is a stark one, particularly when it comes to air pollution that is emitted from sources of human-made greenhouse gas emissions. According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIH), air pollution has detrimental effects on human health and quality of life³. Air pollution exposure is associated with oxidative stress and inflammation in human cells, which can lay a foundation for chronic diseases and cancer.⁴

Air pollution is a significant contributor to cardiopulmonary deaths, playing a role in 10% of deaths in the Twin Cities metro area in 2015 and disproportionately impacting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of

¹ State of Minn. Exec. Dep’t, Executive Order 19-37: Establishing the Climate Change Subcabinet and the Governor’s Advisory Council on Climate Change to Promote Coordinated Climate Change: Mitigation and Resilience Strategies in the State of Minnesota (2019), https://mn.gov/governor/assets/2019_12_2_EO_19-37_Climate_tcm1055-412094.pdf.

² Minn. Climate Change Subcabinet, Minnesota’s Climate Action Framework, 5 (2022), <https://climate.state.mn.us/sites/climate-action/files/Climate%20Action%20Framework.pdf>.

³ *Air Pollution and Your Health*, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (Last reviewed March 2, 2023), available at <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/air-pollution/index.cfm>

⁴ See 3

Color) and under-resourced communities where residents live near highways.⁵ *The 2022 Life and Breath Report*⁶ from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Minnesota Department of Health found that in the Twin Cities metro area, “the highest estimated rates of air pollution-related death and disease are found in neighborhoods with the largest percentage of BIPOC, low-income and uninsured residents, and people who live with a disability.”⁷ The report also states that, “zip codes with the largest percentage of BIPOC residents had more than five times the rate of asthma emergency room visits related to air pollution compared to areas with more white residents.”⁸

The Met Council is the regional policy-making body, planning agency, and provider of essential services in the seven-county Twin Cities metro area, with the mission to foster efficient and economic growth for a prosperous region.⁹ When created, the Met Council was directed to “plan for the orderly and economical development of the seven-county metro area and coordinate the delivery of services that couldn't be provided by any one city or county.”¹⁰ Over time, this has evolved to mean providing services for transit, water and wastewater, parks, housing assistance, and regional planning for the seven-county metro area—all of which have a role to play in climate change mitigation and regional resilience.¹¹

Fresh Energy supports House File 2677. Further, we believe that Met Council should align its climate action plan and strategic goals with current science and the Minnesota Climate Action Framework¹² by committing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions within its jurisdiction via its land use and facilities plans by 50% by 2030 and achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

Sincerely,
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⁵ *Life and Breath: Twin Cities Metro Area*, Minnesota Department of Health and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (2022), At pg. 2, available at

<https://data.web.health.state.mn.us/documents/20147/0/LIFE+and+BREATH+III+METRO+BRIEF-FINAL.pdf/708c1326-4d48-d2a0-64e6-6ae7f6e2995f>

⁶ See 5

⁷ See 5

⁸ See 5

⁹ *Who We Are*, Minnesota Metropolitan Council, <https://metro council.org/About-Us/Who-We-Are.aspx>

¹⁰ History of the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Metropolitan Council, <https://metro council.org/About-Us/What-We-Do/History-of-the-Metropolitan-Council.aspx>

¹¹ See 9

¹² Minn. Climate Change Subcabinet, Minnesota’s Climate Action Framework, 5 (2022),

<https://climate.state.mn.us/sites/climate-action/files/Climate%20Action%20Framework.pdf>.