clean energy economy mn

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March 8, 2023

Minnesota House of Representatives
Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building, Rm. 200
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: House File 2147, Appropriations for the Center for Microgrid Research

Dear Chair Acomb, Representative Her, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM), I write today in support of HF2147 which will provide funds to expand the innovative efforts at the Center for Microgrid Research at the University of St. Thomas (the Center.) This research center strives to be one of the premiere applied engineering research centers in the area of distributed energy resources and microgrids enabling a secure, resilient, and carbon-free electric grid for the 21st century. The Center will utilize funding to advance their research to be tested on a real-world scale that will help achieve a resilient and reliable carbon-free electric grid.

CEEM is an industry-led, nonpartisan, non-profit organization representing the business voice of energy efficiency and clean energy in Minnesota. We work to educate Minnesotans about the economic benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy and are committed to delivering a 100% clean energy future where all Minnesota businesses and citizens will thrive. Our business membership is comprised of nearly 50 clean energy companies ranging from start-up businesses to Fortune 100 and 500 corporations that employ tens of thousands of Minnesotans across the state.

We thank Rep. Her for bringing this bill forward and Chair Acomb for hearing it in committee. This bill, HF2147, will show Minnesota's willingness to support and establish an innovative energy ecosystem that will contribute to the state's clean energy goals and build a stronger foundation for workforce development and hands-on educational training. The Center's research contributes to the evolution of energy and provides innovative solutions to help Minnesota achieve its 100% clean energy by 2040 goal. The Center has also attracted national recognition and active discussions with potential partners positioning Minnesota as a leader in economic opportunities. CEEM was privileged to be at the heart of establishing international relationships at the Center in the past year, specifically with VTT Technical Research Center of Finland, which has since created international partnerships and collaboration.

Today, almost 58,000 Minnesotans work in clean energy, with the advanced grid sector growing 4.8% in the last year, accounting for 2,764 jobs in Minnesota.[1] By continuing to invest in the Center, Minnesota can establish itself as a worldwide leader in microgrid technology. The Center plays a unique and key role in training the future's grid experts and electrical engineers. Funding from this bill also directs the Center to extend this important work to include partnerships with community colleges.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HF2147. We look forward to its passage. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,

George Damian
Director of Government Affairs
gdamian@cleanenergyeconomymn.org

[1] 2022 Clean Jobs Midwest Report: https://www.cleanenergyeconomymn.org/clean-jobs-midwest

1200 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis, MN 55416

March 6, 2023

Dear Minnesota House and Senate Members,

This letter represents the support of Renewable Energy Partners, Inc. for HF 2147-SF 2462 and state funding for the University of St. Thomas' Center for Microgrid Research.

Last year, REP worked collaboratively with CMR on a very important project for North Minneapolis and Minnesota: a solar microgrid and community resiliency hub at three Minneapolis Public Schools buildings. This project will bring some critical resiliency to an Environmental Justice neighborhood by combining 1,200 kilowatts of rooftop solar with a 1,500-kilowatt battery storage system being developed by Xcel Energy.

Students and faculty at St. Thomas, working under the auspices of the CMR, were instrumental in providing some early assessments of usage patterns and energy storage options for this ground-breaking microgrid project.

Even more importantly, REP and CMR are working to develop training and career pathways in microgrid technologies that begin with courses offered at REP's training center in North Minneapolis. CMR shares our commitment to provide access to the skills for developing the microgrid systems of the future for more BIPOC students and residents of under-served communities.

State support for the Center for Microgrid Research will be an important strategic investment that will be significant as Minnesota and the nation continue the transformation to new and cleaner energy systems. We urge your support for this legislation and the impact it can have in our community and across the state.

Sincerely,

Jamez Staples
President and CEO
Renewable Energy Partners
612-282-2573