

March 23, 2026

Co-Chair Acomb, Co-Chair Swedzinski, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for House File 4122, Rep. Hollins's bill to establish requirements for utilities' voluntary plans to create Thermal Energy Networks.

This year, Minnesota is positioned to continue leading on Thermal Energy Networks (TENs).

Over the last two years, Minnesota has done its homework on how to deploy thermal energy networks within a regulated context, in a way that protects the public interest and considers reliability, affordability, environmental impacts, and socioeconomic impacts. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MNPUC) hosted a year-long process with four dozen stakeholder organizations representing utilities, geothermal technology providers, labor organizations, state agencies, cities, academic institutions, low-income communities, clean energy advocates, and consumer protection organizations.

Their recommendations were published on December 15, 2026, opened for public comment by the MNPUC until February 20th, and served as a starting point for the bill you are considering today.

Then, on January 15th, the Minnesota Department of Commerce published nation-leading research that identifies the geographic areas that are more or less suitable for TENs in Minnesota, the potential barriers to their deployment, and the potential ways to address those barriers. To build those analyses, researchers considered geology, the built environment, existing natural gas infrastructure, transportation infrastructure conditions, local planning and permitting, and impacts on environmental justice areas.

Additionally, during 2023, the state legislature advanced five other bills to advance TENs easing their permitting, funding local government planning, providing additional financing opportunities, and creating a state policy preference for waste heat recovery.

The bill before you is one product of these last two years of work, it should make it easier for Minnesota utilities, if they choose to do so, to propose the MNPUC a way to plan, design, finance, and build a TEN that will serve their customers, in a way that is affordable, reliable, and in the public interest.

The bill doesn't make all the progress we can and should make to deploy TENs, but it is a meaningful step in the right direction.

Please vote yes on House File 4122.

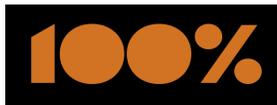
Thank you for your time and consideration,

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