

BICEP Members:

Adobe
Akamai Technologies
Annie's Inc.
Aspen Skiing Company
Autodesk
Aveda
Ben & Jerry's
Burton Snowboards
Clif Bar & Company
Danone North America
Dignity Health
eBay Inc.
Eileen Fisher
Etsy
Fetzer Vineyards
Gap Inc.
General Mills, Inc.
Hackensack Meridian Health
Happy Family Organics
IKEA
Impossible Foods Inc.
Indigo Ag, Inc.
JLL
Kaiser Permanente
KB Home
The Kellogg Company
LBrands
L'Oreal USA
Levi Strauss & Co.
LinkedIn
Lyft
Mars Incorporated
Microsoft Inc.
Nature's Path Foods
Nestle
New Belgium Brewing
Nike, Inc.
The North Face
Outdoor Industry Association
Owens Corning
Patagonia, Inc.
Portland Trail Blazers
REI
Salesforce
Schneider Electric
Seventh Generation
SFO Airport
Sierra Nevada Brewing
Squaw Valley
Starbucks
Stonyfield Farm
Symantec Corporation
Timberland
Unilever
Vail Resorts
VF Corporation
Vulcan, Inc.
Worthen Industries

**Bolted BICEP companies
have operations in Minnesota.*

April 22, 2020 | Submitted Electronically

RE: Business support for H.F. 4502: Energy Conservation and Optimization Act of 2020

Dear Chair Wagenius and members of the House Energy and Climate Finance & Policy Division:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ceres BICEP (Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy) Network – a coalition of 58 major employers and manufacturers across the United States, many of whom have operations and facilities in Minnesota. As a representative of the BICEP Network, **I write to express our support for the proposed Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act.**

Now more than ever, as Minnesota businesses and ratepayers are navigating a shifting economy and business model in the wake of COVID-19, we support the ECO Act as a means to strengthen the energy market, boost economic development, and improve public health in Minnesota.

As large businesses and major energy consumers, we understand firsthand how state energy policies affect the cost of doing business. Energy efficiency is by far the most reliable and cost-effective energy resource; other energy sources can cost between six to sixteen times more than energy efficiency programs.¹ Energy efficiency programs keep our businesses competitive while simultaneously lowering our carbon footprints—a priority for our leadership, communities, employees, shareholders, and customers.

The ECO Act will strengthen Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) by setting higher energy savings targets and integrating load management and efficient fuel-switching technologies into efficiency programs for all utilities. These additional technologies are designed to optimize our energy system by utilizing low-cost, low-carbon, and readily available renewable energy. ECO will also strengthen the state's Energy Efficiency Resource Standard (EERS) by increasing the energy savings goal for investor-owned electric utilities to 1.75% of gross annual retail sales (up from 1.5%) and setting a goal for investor-owned gas utilities at 1% of gross

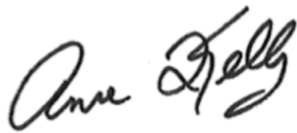
¹ Minnesota Department of Commerce, 2017 CIP Energy and Carbon Dioxide Savings Report, <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/docs/2017/mandated/170154.pdf>

annual sales. The Department of Commerce found that in just two years (2013-2014), combined electric and natural gas savings from CIP conserved enough energy to heat, cool, and power more than 110,000 homes in Minnesota for one year and reduce carbon pollution equal to 325,000 cars on the road for one year.² Increasing the EERS and simultaneously establishing a higher statewide energy savings goal at 2.5% will unlock the much-needed untapped economic potential of CIP and provide invaluable benefits for public health.

Since its implementation in the 1980s, CIP has been a reliable source of jobs and revenue for the state as well as a critical force for progress towards the greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of the 2007 Next Generation Energy Act. By broadening the scope and improving the accessibility of CIP offerings, ECO will drive much needed energy stability and economic return for Minnesota businesses and consumers as they strive to remain competitive in a changing landscape.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, and please do not hesitate to contact us with questions.

Sincerely,



Anne L. Kelly

Vice President Government Relations,

On behalf of Business for Innovative Climate and Energy Policy (BICEP)

For additional information, please contact Mel Mackin, Senior Associate for State Policy at Ceres (mackin@ceres.org).

The Ceres BICEP Network comprises influential companies advocating for stronger climate and clean energy policies at the state and federal level in the U.S. For more information on the Ceres BICEP Network, visit www.ceres.org/BICEP.

² Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources, The Aggregate Economic Impact of the Conservation Improvement Program 2008-2013 (October 2015), <https://mn.gov/commerce/policy-data-reports/energy-data-reports/?id=17-81661>