Thank you for the opportunity to speak before this committee. I'm Kris Leaf, Director of Midwest Utility Programs for Willdan Energy Solutions. Some of you may not recognize that name, but I suspect most of you have heard of The Weidt Group. In 2019, The Weidt Group joined Willdan, a recognized industry leader with $300 million in annual revenues. The affiliation with Willdan provides us with an opportunity to expand opportunities for our local staff and extend our ability to participate in the exciting new frontiers that are emerging in the utility industry.

Willdan's core energy and sustainability services feature electric grid optimization, energy planning and of course energy efficiency and energy design assistance. Willdan believed The Weidt Group's innovative, industry-leading tools were a perfect complement to their other portfolio of services, and we agreed. The broader, nationwide team specializes in energy engineering, renewable generation, electric vehicle fleets and infrastructure, program management, microgrids, PACE financing and other fields. Willdan's services in these fields has saved the equivalent of ~5,400,000 metric tons of CO_2 – and counting.

Our Minnetonka-based division of Willdan has 80 architects, engineers, software developers and other employees. That compares to 25 staff when I started in 2002. We collaborate with thousands of equipment manufacturers, technology vendors, specialty trades and building owners throughout Minnesota. Our expertise helps businesses across the state achieve energy cost savings, carbon footprint reduction, improved working environments, and increased productivity and profitability.

As we gain more exposure to energy and climate policies in other states, we are evermore thankful for Minnesota's forward-thinking policies. Consistent support for demand side management programs allows businesses like ours to invest in people and products that keep our services cost-effective and relevant to a changing world. There is no doubt in our mind that the support provided by these programs has provided us with an advantage over competitors in other states.

When we started on our first CIP program thirty years ago, we did 6 projects per year, each of which took about 12 weeks to complete the analysis. Now, we do about 1,000 projects per year, and provide analysis in real-time. This is what it takes to succeed in a world in which people are used to getting answers to questions instantly on their iPhone. Furthermore, our initial efforts were focused on moderating the growth of summertime peak electric demand. With the environmental and economic opportunities associated with wind and solar, the economics that drive these programs, and the resulting priorities, are changing. We are very excited about what this means for our industry. We truly believe we have some the best utility clients in the nation, and their leadership is supported by strong and consistent policies which are fostered by programs like CIP and B3.

In the coming years, advanced technology will be a key to sustaining growth in the Minnesota clean energy economy as the industry moves to renewable energy and self-sustaining grids. With homegrown software development, Willdan is well positioned to develop the analytical tools that capitalize on emerging technologies to fuel the future growth of clean energy opportunities. Our team looks forward to a bright future for our staff, and all of Minnesota's clean energy industry workers.