



**CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA**

March 13, 2023

Chair Olson and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

We write today to ask for your support of HF 1656 (Acomb), enhancing the competitiveness of our state in obtaining federal money for energy projects.

At Conservation Minnesota, our mission is to protect the people and the places that Minnesotans love. Fighting climate change and transitioning to clean energy are central to this goal; and ensuring that Minnesotans are leading and benefiting in this process is vital. By establishing Minnesota's State Competitiveness Fund, HF 1656 (Acomb) puts local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and other entities in a position to accelerate our energy transition with federal funding. In doing so, this bill takes responsibility in the climate fight while bolstering our local economy.

As noted by the Department of Commerce, Minnesota is eligible to receive funding from over 20 competitive pots of federal money, representing billions of dollars in grants for energy transition projects. Many of these pots require a state match, and all of these pots require staffing and technical assistance to ensure that state and local governments, Tribal governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations can capture this funding. Establishing a State Competitiveness Fund allows Minnesota to provide state matching funds, grant writing capacity in rural and disadvantaged communities, and staffing capacity necessary to receive and use funding.

Unlocking and leveraging federal energy investments allows Minnesota to pursue important improvements across the energy sector, but perhaps most impactfully in grid infrastructure. Through the U.S. Department of Energy, over \$17 billion is available for grid infrastructure programs, allowing our state and its utilities to improve resiliency, bolster reliability, and enable innovative technologies. In the wake of Minnesota's landmark 100% Clean Energy Bill, we must accelerate the build out of clean energy technologies and the transmission infrastructure that allows its use. HF 1656 helps obtain the funding to make this possible.

As Minnesota continues its work to reduce carbon emissions, it's crucial that we have the resources to do so. We can't afford to leave Minnesota entities behind, and we can't afford to leave funding on the table. HF 1656 ensures that we can leverage federal funds and keep our state on track toward a clean, affordable, and reliable energy future. *We respectfully urge your support.*

Sincerely,

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