



Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Representative Jamie Long
Chair House Climate & Energy Finance & Policy Committee
517 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 5, 2022

RE: Support for HF 3337

Dear Chair Long,
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC), a multidisciplinary network of over 500 Minnesota health professionals, acknowledges that we are facing a climate emergency that increasingly puts our health in jeopardy. Yet another IPCC report warns us of dire consequences for our health and our planet, if we do not limit global warming to less than 1.5°C through rapid mitigation efforts by 2030. HPHC supports HF3337, House Climate & Energy Omnibus bill, which includes policies and investments that support the transition to net zero GHG emissions by 2050 to mitigate the worst effects of climate change on our health and build resilient and equitable communities and economies.

Climate effects, such as extreme heat, severe storms and flooding, wildfires, drought, and vector-borne diseases, are increasingly impacting the physical and mental health of Minnesotans. Climate change is also increasing our exposure to air pollution. Our summers are getting hotter, which means higher ozone levels. On hot days air stagnates, giving pollutants from vehicle exhaust time to react with each other and form ground level ozone, which triggers asthma attacks. Wildfires are more frequent. Wildfire smoke exposure is associated with decreased numbers and altered gene expression of immune cells in children,¹ and exacerbation of asthma and COPD symptoms, as well as increased risk of respiratory infections and deaths from all causes.² Minnesota communities with higher percentages of lower income people, people of color, and indigenous people are exposed to higher levels of air pollution from all sources.³ An alarming 91% of communities of color and Indigenous communities are exposed to levels of air pollution above health guidelines.⁴

HF3337's investments will reduce GHGs emissions and air pollution, to save lives and improve public health. The bill provides needed investments in EV charging infrastructure, energy storage, grid resilience, electric panel upgrades, expanding solar on schools and public buildings, climate-resilient infrastructure and energy innovation. Establishing a state competitiveness fund is necessary for Minnesota to take advantage of opportunities to leverage federal funding available through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, providing benefits

to taxpayers and ratepayers. State investments in weatherization will reduce GHGs, contribute to healthy homes and save money on energy costs for families, especially those who can least afford it. Investments in economic development and green jobs training will benefit our climate and provide a pathway to well-paying jobs and increased family and community wealth.

HF3337's climate policies and investments will help Minnesota reduce carbon emissions and contribute to healthier lives and a more equitable economy for Minnesota.

Yours in health,

Kathleen Schuler, MPH
Policy Director
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
Keschuler47@gmail.com, 612-382-5917

¹ Prunicki M, Kelsey R, Lee J, Zhou X et al. The impact of prescribed fire versus wildfire on the immune and cardiovascular systems of children. *Allergy*. 2019;74(10):1989-91.

² Reid CE, Brauer M, Johnston FH, Jerrett M et al. Critical review of health impacts of wildfire smoke exposure. *Envir Health Perspectives*. 2016;124(90):1334-1343.

³ MPCA, 2019.

⁴ MPCA, The Air We Breathe, The State of Minnesota's Air Quality 2019. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/lraq-1sy19.pdf>