



March 18, 2021

Subject: Solar Industry Supports use of Renewable Development Account funds to expand Mountain Iron's Renewable Energy Industrial Park

Representatives:

The Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association (MnSEIA) is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit trade organization that represents our state's solar and energy storage businesses. Together we represent over 120 solar companies and related businesses, which employ over 4,200 Minnesotans. On behalf of Minnesota's solar energy business community, we write to encourage appropriations from the Renewable Development Account (RDA) to support the state's solar industries.

The proposal in HF 1978 to fund the expansion of the city-owned solar module manufacturing plant building in Mountain Iron's Renewable Energy Industrial Park will add much-needed manufacturing jobs to Greater Minnesota communities, while creating modules for use across Minnesota and North America. Heliene, which leases the facility, manufactures the highest-rated quality solar modules available, Tier 1, and serves markets in Minnesota and across the globe. Heliene is the only solar module manufacturer in the Midwest, and its geographic proximity to solar development here in Minnesota and in nearby states like Illinois has brought the benefits of the growing solar industries in the region home to the Iron Range.

Much of the solar development in Minnesota has, and will likely continue to take place in the service territory of the state's largest utility, Xcel Energy, whose ratepayers fund the RDA. The use of RDA funds to expand the city-owned facility will therefore return dividends to Xcel customers by way of the Iron Range, ensuring that these dollars recirculate through the economy of Minnesota.

The inclusion of this underlying bill in the Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee's omnibus bill will dovetail nicely with the other important carbon-free electricity and electrification proposals that will undoubtedly be in the general omnibus bill. Including HF 1978 will show this body's commitment to home grown renewable energy and job creation throughout the state. It should be something that both the House and Senate can get behind as a step towards a One Minnesota approach to energy deployment.

We respectfully ask for your support for the inclusion of Representative Lislegard's bill in this year's Energy omnibus, so that the economic benefits of clean energy are shared across the state.

Sincerely,

Peter Teigland
Policy Associate
Minnesota Solar Energy Industries Association