



April 13, 2026

To the Honorable Members of the Minnesota House Energy Finance and Policy Committee

**RE: Support for H2862DE1**

Chairs Acomb, Swedzinski and Members of the Committee:

MN Interfaith Power and Light works with communities across the state to promote equitable and effective climate solutions. We support H2862 DE1 because it addresses critical gaps in environmental review, permitting, and public engagement for hyperscale data centers.

State statutes haven't caught up with the arrival of hyperscalers, leaving cities with small staffs and often limited expertise to navigate huge projects with tools that are ineffective for this purpose. The language in H2862 DE1 remedies this with:

- **Consistent Environmental Review:** Current review of impacts of these projects is inconsistent and insufficient. This proposal fixes that with an array of factors to be detailed in an individualized environmental impact study process, including:
  - Will nearby residences be impacted by bright lights, noise or pollution?
  - How will electronic waste from the data centers be handled?
  - How will the facility be decommissioned when the time comes?
- **Consistent Opportunities for Informed Public Engagement:** Current law affords the public minimal opportunities for engagement that have so far been applied unevenly and often leave communities surprised about the project and feeling as though they have no voice. This bill details that the environmental review process referenced above kicks off with mailed notices to the local media and those who live within five miles of the proposed project. It also requires at least one public meeting to help the public understand the environmental review process set to begin.
- **A Permit Requirement:** This bill tasks the PUC with granting or denying a permit based on a holistic look at numerous factors including environmental impacts. It also requires financial assurance sufficient to reclaim the land in the event the data center is no longer being used.

The gaping holes in our regulatory framework leave local communities unprotected. We ask you to put these and other important provisions in place now or pass a moratorium on building data centers until the appropriate framework has been established.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bret Pence".

Bret Pence  
Northern Minnesota Director  
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Wolff".

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