



408 Saint Peter Street, Suite 350  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

PHONE 651 225 0878

EMAIL [info@fresh-energy.org](mailto:info@fresh-energy.org)

WEBSITE [fresh-energy.org](http://fresh-energy.org)

March 21, 2023

Minnesota House of Representatives Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Committee  
559 Minnesota State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and Committee Members,

My name is Joe Dammel and I am writing to you today on behalf of Fresh Energy. Fresh Energy is a 30-year-old, Minnesota based non-partisan, non-profit organization that is working to achieve equitable, carbon neutral economies. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on House File 2269.

Buildings are one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and account for about 40 percent of emissions both statewide and nationally. In order to address these emissions, understanding where the largest and highest emitting buildings are and how much energy they are using is a critical first step. The goal of House File 2269 is to do just that, by implementing an energy benchmarking requirement for buildings over 50,000 square feet. Benchmarking is a best practice that compares a building or equipment energy performance to itself, to peers, or to established standards. Additionally, the program in this bill will give tenants the opportunity to understand their building's energy use and how it compares to other buildings. The goal of benchmarking is to identify opportunities for improvement in performance, energy efficiency, safety, and comfort, while establishing a baseline for addressing emissions from this sector.

State-owned buildings have been using a benchmarking tool to evaluate energy use and identify opportunities for energy improvement since the early 2000's. Today, the system keeps data on more than 7,500 public buildings in Minnesota and has identified more than \$23 million in potential energy savings. Expanding this practice to large commercial buildings will help identify no-cost operational changes a building manager can make to save on energy bills as well as prioritize efficiency investments a property owner can make.

Benchmarking also helps identify hidden problems by providing high-level building efficiency information that can flag equipment failure or unexpected operation – common causes of unnecessarily high operating costs. Issues like stuck variable air volume boxes and simultaneous heating and cooling are common in larger buildings. According to a three-year U.S. EPA analysis of 35,000 benchmarked buildings, buildings reduced energy consumption by an average of 2.4% annually, for a total savings of 7% on energy bills after three years.

House File 2269 will help property owners reduce energy use and operating costs, and will help Minnesota understand the sources of and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We thank Representative Kraft for authoring House File 2269; Fresh Energy is committed to continuing to work with the bill author and stakeholders to help create an efficient and cost-effective benchmarking program that works for Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Joe Dammel  
Managing Director, Buildings – Fresh Energy  
[dammel@fresh-energy.org](mailto:dammel@fresh-energy.org)