



March 23, 2026

Co-Chair Patty Acomb
Energy Finance and Policy Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives

Co-Chair Acomb and Members of the Committee:

Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to discover and deploy the most effective energy solutions that strengthen the economy and improve the environment.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this letter of support for House File 4122, which establishes a regulatory pathway for utilities to develop and implement Thermal Energy Networks (TENs) in Minnesota. In areas of the state with the right set of criteria, TENs represent an opportunity to provide reliable and efficient heating and cooling services to multiple buildings through a network of underground pipes while reducing emissions.

House File 4122 builds on the recommendations included in the Thermal Energy Network Deployment Workgroup Report, developed at the direction of the Legislature in 2024, and builds on the groundwork laid in the Natural Gas Innovation Act passed by the Legislature in 2021. TENs are one of the innovative resources included in the NGIA statute that are now being piloted by gas utilities in their NGIA plans. As gas utilities develop and pilot this resource, House File 4122 enables them to scale those learnings into broader TEN projects, and includes siting, consumer protection, and cost recovery provisions to guide deployment.

Thermal Energy Networks are an important tool as Minnesota makes progress on building heating and cooling solutions that are reliable, affordable, and reduce emissions. CEE appreciates the work of stakeholders in developing the Thermal Energy Network Deployment Workgroup Report, and the bill authors for advancing energy policy to support TENs development in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Will Nissen
Director of Policy
Center for Energy and Environment
wnissen@mncee.org



Twin Cities Minnesota Chapter

March 23, 2026

House File 4122 (Hollins)

Chair Acomb and House Energy Finance and Policy Committee Members –

Elders Climate Action, Twin Cities Chapter is a nonpartisan group of 160 seniors who are concerned about the climate crisis and advocate for strong policies that will reduce greenhouse gases in our atmosphere to a level consistent with life thriving on our planet. We value being good ancestors for children, grandchildren and all life.

Elders Climate Action, Twin Cities Chapter strongly supports HF4122 as thermal energy networks (TENS) offer many important benefits to Minnesotans, including:

- **Affordable heating and cooling:** TENS can deliver up to 600% more efficient heating than the best gas furnaces on the market today.
- **Public savings:** TENS lower operating costs for public buildings like schools and fire stations, and replace expensive fossil-fuel systems with highly efficient shared infrastructure, lowering energy costs and benefitting taxpayers.
- **Good jobs:** Pipefitters and utility workers are needed to design, construct, and maintain TENS. New family-sustaining jobs are created as these projects are developed and expanded over time.
- **Lower Dependence on Out-of-State Energy Resources:** TENS use local energy resources, including the ground beneath our feet, to help stabilize energy costs and prevent households from being locked into decades of expensive gas infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We urge the committee to pass House File 4122.

Sincerely,

Paul Thompson and Mike Griffin, Legislative Team Co-chairs
Elders Climate Action, Twin Cities Chapter
ecatwincities.org
twincities@eldersclimateaction.org

Dear Legislators,

My name is Kayla Carrigan, and I'm a lifelong Minnesota resident and a current citizen of Saint Paul. I've been organizing with Unidos, and for most of my life have been interested in advancing our communities forward to meet the challenges around climate change. Unidos has been instrumental in helping me learn about the possibility to fund Thermal Energy Networks here in Saint Paul and more broadly in Minnesota. I'm writing in support of HF4122 – Thermal Energy Network Plan authored by Athena Hollins (my representative) and others. The barriers to establishing thermal energy networks in our state have been steadily decreasing and we've seen that various thermal energy projects have been planned and implemented with success.

Establishing a plan that allows utilities to recoup costs of creating non-gas infrastructure will pave the way for low-cost options like geothermal in our cities. My personal energy bills have only gone up since I purchased a home in 2021, and I know that other homeowners are feeling the burden of energy costs along with insurance rates skyrocketing and ever-increasing health care and food costs. At some point, Minnesota has to push for renewable and lower-cost options that aren't based around fossil fuels. This is an opportunity to be a leader and learn from other cities about how we can use geothermal to support residents staying in their homes and having an affordable and sustainable energy source right in their neighborhoods.

Please support this bill, it would show incredible leadership and a willingness to change how we heat and cool our homes as our climate changes.

Thanks,

Kayla Carrigan

724 Simon Avenue

Saint Paul, MN 55117

March 23,2026

RE: HF4122 (Hollins) – Thermal energy network plan requirements established

Dear Mike Molzahn:

Please accept this written testimony in support of HF4122. I am a long-time resident of Minnesota and member of Unidos MN. On behalf of myself and our community, I am urging passage of HF4122 to help stabilize both utility rates and the climate. Granting utilities the ability to offer thermal energy as part of a portfolio of services will provide an urgently needed alternative to the use of natural gas as a heating source. Thermal energy networks are a proven heating source in Minnesota winters and around the globe in places with a similar temperature profile.

Opposition by established natural gas utilities is shortsighted at best. The expertise required to build thermal energy networks - drilling wells and laying pipes – is an ideal fit for existing expertise and skill. Utilities will find themselves at a competitive disadvantage, having their market share undercut by innovative businesses and municipalities, if they don't adopt forward-looking solutions now. Thermal energy particularly makes sense for higher density housing where capital costs are offset by low operating costs.

I was lucky to attend a workshop in 2025 hosted by the Steamfitters and Pipefitters Local 455 at their training facility in Saint Paul. The training facility (which occupies a square block) is entirely heated and cooled by thermal energy. The union is excited to be building our way toward a carbon-free future as should our regulated utilities.

Regards,
Rob Mosimann
Saint Paul, MN

Written Testimony in Support of HF4122 – Thermal Energy Networks

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Narayan Nazare, and I am a resident of Lowertown St. Paul, MN.

I came to the United States from India in 2016 and have built my life here. As someone who cares about both economic opportunity and long-term sustainability, I believe investing in clean, reliable heating infrastructure is essential for our future.

I am writing in support of HF4122. This bill provides a practical path to reduce emissions from building heating while maintaining affordability and reliability. Thermal energy networks, including networked geothermal systems, can significantly improve efficiency and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

HF4122 also helps address cost concerns for households. These systems offer lower and more stable operating costs over time, reducing exposure to volatile natural gas prices and helping lower energy bills.

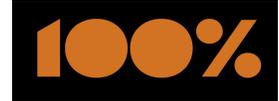
In addition, this bill creates meaningful economic opportunity. Building thermal energy network infrastructure will require skilled labor, supporting local jobs in construction, engineering, and long-term system operations.

Projects already underway in St. Paul demonstrate that this technology is viable in Minnesota's climate. Expanding this approach will help move communities toward long-term climate goals while strengthening local economies.

For these reasons, I urge you to support HF4122.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Narayan Nazare



March 23, 2026

Co-Chair Acomb, Co-Chair Swedzinski, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for House File 4122, Rep. Hollins's bill to establish requirements for utilities' voluntary plans to create Thermal Energy Networks.

This year, Minnesota is positioned to continue leading on Thermal Energy Networks (TENs).

Over the last two years, Minnesota has done its homework on how to deploy thermal energy networks within a regulated context, in a way that protects the public interest and considers reliability, affordability, environmental impacts, and socioeconomic impacts. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MNPUC) hosted a year-long process with four dozen stakeholder organizations representing utilities, geothermal technology providers, labor organizations, state agencies, cities, academic institutions, low-income communities, clean energy advocates, and consumer protection organizations.

Their recommendations were published on December 15, 2026, opened for public comment by the MNPUC until February 20th, and served as a starting point for the bill you are considering today.

Then, on January 15th, the Minnesota Department of Commerce published nation-leading research that identifies the geographic areas that are more or less suitable for TENs in Minnesota, the potential barriers to their deployment, and the potential ways to address those barriers. To build those analyses, researchers considered geology, the built environment, existing natural gas infrastructure, transportation infrastructure conditions, local planning and permitting, and impacts on environmental justice areas.

Additionally, during 2023, the state legislature advanced five other bills to advance TENs easing their permitting, funding local government planning, providing additional financing opportunities, and creating a state policy preference for waste heat recovery.

The bill before you is one product of these last two years of work, it should make it easier for Minnesota utilities, if they choose to do so, to propose the MNPUC a way to plan, design, finance, and build a TEN that will serve their customers, in a way that is affordable, reliable, and in the public interest.

The bill does make all the progress we can and should make to deploy TENs, but it is a meaningful step in the right direction.

Please vote yes on House File 4122.

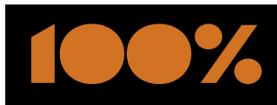
Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aurora Vautrin

Aurora Vautrin

Legislative Director

www.100percentmn.org



Lars Negstad

Lars Negstad

Policy Director

www.isaiahmn.org



Sara Lopez

Sara Lopez

Policy Director

www.unidos-mn.org



My name is Grace Finnerty and I am a student at the University of Minnesota, originally from Winona, Minnesota. I am writing in support of HF4122 because it opens the door for clean, practical, and responsible infrastructure development in our state through the use of thermal energy networks. This is a concrete step that takes us in the right direction, toward cleaner air. This legislation ends restrictions around what kind of infrastructure development is supported by the state, allowing companies the freedom to provide the infrastructure that their customers prefer. This is legislation that should be supported by any representative that believes in more consumer choice and clean air.

Testimony in support of HF4122 (Hollins) UTENJA

March 23, 2026

Joan Pasiuk

64B

1984 Jefferson St Paul 55105

joanpasiuk@msn.com

My husband and I live in a century-old small bungalow in the heart of St Paul. Over the past 8-9 years we committed to a path of becoming all-electric. It was not easy. We were able to access excellent information and support through Center for Energy and the Environment, for example. Still, did I mention it was not easy? It was expensive and scary.

We worked with a series of contractors through enhanced weatherization, conversion of gas to electric appliances, and unexpected and ghastly expensive electrical work. Even with experts around us we did intense research on heat pump technology for heating/cooling and water heating. It was a mission we remained committed to.

We had explored installation of an air source heat pump several years earlier and knew the cost was out of range. But the 30-year US savings bonds we inherited from my parents matured -- we thought at face value -- but learned at double face value!!! Bring back those ASHP installers for a serious conversation!! The last phase was upgrade of the solar array we had hosted for over 10 years. Finally Xcel came to remove our gas meter (“Are you sure you want us to do this?”).

Last year our residential energy use was net zero. At every step of the way we knew how privileged we were -- accessing every federal benefit then available, Xcel solar rewards, retirement savings and an inheritance. We did this because we care and because we could.

I write today -- and my husband and I are in so much clean energy advocacy and supportive efforts -- because we want this same opportunity for homes and buildings across St P and across MN. Transformation is ultimately not every homeowner or landlord trudging through their own technology and finance frontier, it is system work that moves us as a city and a state from gas to renewables. It is system work that makes the critical goal of climate equity a reality. This means, in part, passing the recommendations of the TEN Workgroup into law and mandating indoor air quality standards will help build communities reliant on the long-term investments of clean energy rather than the short-term investments of destructive gas utilities.

HF4122 is a critical piece of this climate justice work. It will enable developers to make investment decisions based on the way the market is moving -- lower cost renewables. It

will help move us all away from toxic and price volatile fossil gas. It will give us an important foundation for climate justice. Please pass HF4122.

To whom it may concern,

I've lived in a little neighborhood on the east side of St Paul for the last 25 years. It's called Railroad Island because we're bordered on every side by railroad tracks. Our micro community consists of people from many cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and historically, we are made up of more renters than homeowners. I work in healthcare and many years ago, I listened to a doctor talk about lowered life expectancy in residents within a two-mile radius of Regions Hospital. This radius included my neighborhood. At the time, I wondered about the contributing factors to these numbers and assumed it was primarily based on the fact that many of my neighbors earn less than the median income. I also guessed some neighbors might have less access to healthcare, due to the high price of insurance and mistrust of the medical system.

It wasn't until years later, as I became more engaged in climate resiliency work, that I began to consider how environmental factors also likely play a significant part in these diminished life expectancy statistics. I started to learn more about how indoor and outdoor air quality affects children and adults, especially in heavily urbanized areas, like Railroad Island. Last year, in talking to my neighbors about home weatherization programs, I learned that many people are struggling to afford their utility bills and consider heating and powering their homes a significant source of stress. With the enormous rise in utility costs since then, the stress of trying to keep a home comfortable and livable has become a major life stressor, threatening the well-being and safety of many of my neighbors.

Bills like UTENJA offer neighborhoods like Railroad Island hope for a future without sharp, sudden rises in utility costs as the result of fossil fuel dependency. Proposed TENs network projects such as the new Hamm's Brewery site would have the option to incorporate a TENs into their building plan without having to pay for the infrastructure themselves (BJ Vang considered a TENs for their project but had to abandon it because the cost of the infrastructure was a significant financial burden). This project, if it could be funded, has the potential to deliver heat to homes within Railroad Island, which could make a significant impact on utility affordability in our neighborhood, as well as creating more living wage jobs in our community.

I urge you to support UTENJA as a means of paving the way for affordable, clean energy for all Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Giffin

elizabeth.giffin <egiffin19@yahoo.com>

My name is Charles Ernst—I am a senior at Como Park Senior High and a member of the UNIDOS Saint Paul ancillary team. I am writing to express my full support for the upcoming UTENJA bill and my earnest desire for such infrastructure and climate bills to be passed as quickly as possible.

But first, a story. A story that lies firmly outside state lines, yet evidences an inescapable truth that is not contained by boundaries. A story about the world.

My family has owned a cabin southwest of Superior for over five years now, deep in the heart of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. Through it, I have discovered the sense of deep peace, of personal solace, that comes from a retreat from the bustling metro into areas less touched by human industry. But I have since learned to never equate “less touched” and “untouched” when it comes to the destructive potential of humankind.

It was less than a year ago now that we drove up to our cabin in late fall—one of the last trips of the year—and turned into the forest road leading up to our cabin to find most of the trees in that parcel of land gone. Orange slashes along those remaining were the unmistakable hallmarks of loggers. We were stunned—this was supposed to be regulated land, was it not? What had changed?

It did not take much research to find the answer. In the name of “encouraging energy resiliency”, the federal government had initiated several policies loosening regulations of natural land. Before any federal environmental agency had time to protest the policies, loggers had flocked to national forests like ravenous wolves loosed from their pens.

And this is the problem when our country is controlled by ravenous wolves—the feast continues even after they are satisfied. From our country’s inception, the prevailing opinion has been to gather whatever is necessary to profit as much as possible as quickly as possible. We simply never know when to quit. Even today, after our species has beat down so many others, after we poison ourselves with our exponentially increasing air emissions, after “pristine” natural land is a thing of the distant past, many of our federal representatives are content to sit in their ivory towers and declare the destruction of what little we have left.

But you have the responsibility to decide how our state will respond. The time is long since past to choose a side and commit to it. And yes, neutrality is a side. It is the side of the ivory-tower-sitters. Because the longer we delay action, the worse everything gets.

We are long past any hope of recreating the world that existed before the touch of humanity. What we are fighting for now is the end of this destruction, this pillaging of that which was never ours. The movement has already begun. But we will be hard-pressed to go anywhere without your help. So I ask for only that which the world, and therefore humanity needs.

It will have to start somewhere. Such actions as passing the UTENJA draft into law will help build a city reliant on the long-term investments of clean energy rather than the short-term investments of destructive gas utilities. These are two actions you can take today which might just be the falling rock that heralds the avalanche of positive change.

This action is necessary for the future of our global climate, but also for everything it impacts. The data are clear—failing to act is far more expensive than choosing to. The price of sluggish progress is very real. And when the climate suffers, so too does everything reliant on it, from the engines of industry to the fields of agriculture to the very framework of the society we live in. We’re counting on you to save it all.

-Charles