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Testimony in Support of 100% Clean Energy Standard with Amendments.

Testimony presented before the Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Climate and Energy Finance and Policy on 1/17/2023

Regarding: HF 7

Thank you Chair Patty Acomb, Vice-Chair Larry Kraft and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony today.

100% Clean Energy Standard

Minnesota prides itself on its culture of outdoor recreation. No matter the weather, we love to take time out in the lake or hiking through the beautiful forests that are a part of our home.

However, that natural atmosphere will change if we do not take the steps necessary to protect that environment. The country has seen droughts, fires, and hurricanes that only worsen with each passing season. Here, winters change from year to year that prompt people to discuss, sometimes at great length, how unusual this particular winter is. Winters in Minnesota are warming at 13 times the rate of our summers. If we don't act, the winters we pride ourselves on will be a thing of the past. We can no longer ignore the idea that climate change is a problem because that problem is already manifesting itself. Creating a 100% clean energy economy that meets bold but achievable benchmarks is one of the most critical tactics we have to combat carbon emissions, and we need one that does not allow for dirty fuel sources such as biofuels

and trash incineration or environmental justice issues like those from expanding definitions of hydro electric power.

Transitioning to 100% gives Minnesota a unique opportunity. Not only can it take the bold steps that we need to take to protect Minnesota's natural wonder, but it would expand the economy and create jobs in an economically important sector. 61,800 Minnesotans already work in clean energy. The clean energy economy is growing 2.5 times faster than the rest of the Minnesota economy. Better still, these jobs are not only in the Metro but in every county in Minnesota! By formally pushing for a transition to 100% clean energy, Minnesota could continue to invest and grow a booming sector of jobs so that those left behind by antiquated energy sectors will have a place in the clean energy economy.

Many other states have already created clean energy standards, and 15 states have set goals for 100% renewable energy. The only state in our region to make that leap is Wisconsin, and by executive order. Minnesota could set the standard for the rest of the region and be the leader we think of ourselves as being. We could use Minnesota's entrepreneurial spirit to create a new vibrant economy that emphasizes wind and solar energy. We can use the vast creativity and community here to create an equitable clean energy economy that meets the needs of all Minnesotans. In accomplishing this, we can lead our neighbors in the right way to achieve 100% clean energy and set the tone for future legislation in states who have yet to create a clean energy standard.

Even with all the positives of a 100% clean energy standard, we need to make sure that Minnesota does it in the best, most just way possible. That means that we have to leave biomass incineration and trash incineration which creates a disproportionate risk to children in Environmental Justice Communities and can be more damaging to the climate than coal

incineration. Additionally, trash incineration creates dangerous toxic ash, which ends up in the air as well as landfills. The definition of renewable energy should remove these forms of energy from the definition of renewable energy due to the environmental damage and public health concerns.

Additionally, expansion of hydroelectric energy sources contained in current bill amendments creates environmental justice concerns for tribes in Manitoba, Canada from the Metis Nation, Anishinaabe, and other tribes currently and ancestrally located in the vicinity of Manitoba Hydroelectric. The better definition of hydroelectric power is the one currently codified in definitions of renewable energy and we ask that you revert the definition of hydroelectric to that definition.

A 100% just transition to a clean energy economy is essential for our climate's health and well-being and for Minnesota to lead our region in energy innovation. We need to create a robust clean energy economy. We ask that you pass HF 7 with amendments removing biomass incineration and reverting to the original definition of hydroelectric. This bill is in line with the Governor's own priorities and follows the timeline of major energy producers like Xcel energy. Now is the time to begin this transition. The health of our state depends on it.

Respectfully Submitted,

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