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Overview

House File 235 renames and repurposes the Renewable Development Account, in which Xcel Energy deposits approximately \$25 million annually, based on the number of storage casks containing nuclear waste that are kept at its Prairie Island and Monticello nuclear plants. The bulk of funds in the account have been used in the past for research grants for new renewable energy technologies. This bill terminates the grant program and directs the funds to a new energy fund account. The bill also repeals an incentive payment made to owners of solar panels that meet qualifications established in statute as “Made in Minnesota.” Those already enrolled in the program will continue to receive their full 10-year complement of payments, but no new applications for incentives will be taken. A “Made in Minnesota” solar thermal rebate program is also repealed.

Section

- 1 **[16B.323] Solar energy in state buildings.** Conforming language.
- 2 **[116C.779] Subd. 1. Energy fund account.** Renames the renewable development account the energy fund account. Directs Xcel Energy to transfer all funds contained in the former into the new account and to annually withhold sufficient funds from the new account to pay Renewable Energy Production Incentives under section 216C.41. Strikes language governing operations of the grant program formerly funded from the renewable development account.
- 3 **[116C.7792] Solar energy incentive program.** Conforming language.
- 4 **[216C.41] Subd. 2. Incentive payment; appropriation.** Conforming language.

Section

- 5** [216C.41] **Subd. 5a. Payment authorization.** Conforming language.
- 6** [216C.417] **Program administration; “Made in Minnesota” solar energy production incentives.** Directs that incentive payments continue to be made under the “Made in Minnesota” solar program to currently enrolled qualifying solar panel owners in order to fulfill the state’s commitment to them to pay production-based incentives for 10 years. For these owners, the program will continue to be administered under the original statutory provisions.
- 7** **Program administration; “Made in Minnesota” solar thermal rebates.** Prohibits “Made in Minnesota” solar thermal rebate payments to be made after the effective date of this act. Directs that unspent funds in the solar thermal rebate account be transferred to the energy fund account.
- 8** **Repealer.** (a) Repeals Minnesota Statutes 2016, section 116C.779, subdivision 3, which provided funds to the University of Minnesota’s Institute for Renewable Energy and the Environment through 2011.
- (b) Repeals Minnesota Statutes 2016, sections 174.187 (requiring any solar panels installed by the Department of Transportation to be “Made in Minnesota” panels); 216C.411 through 216C.416 (“Made in Minnesota” program statutes).
- (c) Repeals Minnesota Laws 2013, chapter 85, article 6, section 11 (requires all solar photovoltaics appropriated with money in that act to qualify as “Made in Minnesota”).