



April 29, 2019

To: Members of the Minnesota Senate

Dear Senator,

We, the undersigned organizations and the citizens we represent, respectfully ask you to Vote NO on the **Jobs, Housing and Energy Omnibus Bill, HF 2208**.

This bill would roll back energy efficiency standards, create counterproductive barriers to the successful Community Solar Garden program, repeal Minnesota's long-standing moratorium on building new nuclear power plants, and weaken our existing renewable energy standards.

We do appreciate several provisions that point Minnesota in the right direction:

- **Providing grants for Solar for Schools.**
- **Doubling investments by Investor-Owned Utilities in energy conservation for low-income Minnesotans.**
- **Encouraging utilities to create energy storage pilot projects.**
- **Creating a revolving loan fund for electric vehicle charging stations.**

However, taken together we cannot look past the damage done to policy infrastructure as Minnesota works to achieve an equitable clean energy economy as fast as possible to protect our state's health, economy and future.

While not a comprehensive list, we are very concerned about the following provisions:

Art. 8, Sec. 2 – Creates barriers to Community Solar Gardens. It terminates the existing Community Solar Gardens program and replaces it with a new process that complicates certification and subscription. It allows utilities to set the rates they will pay for the energy the solar gardens generate. It unnecessarily caps the growth of Community Solar Gardens to 25 megawatts per year.

Art. 8, Sec. 3 – Weakens Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard. It will slow our transition to wind and solar by allowing large scale hydropower (with a capacity of 100 megawatts or more) to be counted toward meeting renewable requirements without also raising the Renewable Energy Standard.

Art. 8, Sec. 4 – Ends Minnesota's nuclear facility moratorium. It lifts our twenty-five year old moratorium on building a new nuclear-powered electric generating plants. Nuclear continues to pose grave risks, is expensive for ratepayers, impacts communities already disproportionately affected by environmental problems and our clean water resources, and leaves a burden of toxic pollution for future generations.

Art. 8, Sec. 11 – Interferes with agency independence and ability to protect Minnesotans.

The bill would prohibit the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce from using money appropriated to the Department of Commerce to fund any activities related to an appeal concerning the certificate of need issued to Enbridge Energy for the Line 3 pipeline replacement project. The authorities and independence of the Department of Commerce to protect the long-term well-being of Minnesotans should be maintained.

Art. 9, Sec. 1 – Rolls back energy efficiency progress. Despite the fact that energy efficiency is key to a clean energy future, saving rate payers money and meeting carbon reduction goals, this bill allows cooperative and municipal utilities to substitute and replace a significant portion of their traditional energy efficiency programs with activities such as electrification. While increasing the electrification of our economy is good, it is detrimental to do this at the expense of progress on energy efficiency. Utilities prefer this provision because it increases electricity demand, rather than lowering it. In truth, the twin needs of our coming clean energy economy require that we both 1) increase efficiency everywhere, and 2) move our energy needs to electricity – ultimately growing the amount of clean electricity that will be used.

This provision also removes Minnesota Department of Commerce oversight and allows cooperative and municipal utilities the ability to opt out of paying for statewide shared-benefits programs including applied research and development grants, Clean Energy Resource Teams funding, state agency technical and coordination assistance funding, and funding for energy efficiency benchmarking and tracking systems. This provision also includes unrelated efficiency provisions such as solar energy incentives that would conflict and compete with efficiency investments.

Art. 10, Sec. 1 – Lowers Xcel’s payments to the Renewable Development Account for storage of nuclear waste. Currently, Xcel pays \$500,000 annually for each dry cask of nuclear waste it generates, an amount that increases as more waste accumulates. This bill switches to a flat fee system where Xcel pays \$33,000,000 in 2020; \$31,000,000 in 2021; and \$20,000,000 every year until the plants retire. When retired, Xcel would pay \$12,750,000 per year. This will reduce support for renewable energy projects in Xcel service territory while continuing to store more nuclear waste.

Minnesota has seen great progress and growth as it transitions to a clean energy economy -- creating jobs and cleaning our air simultaneously. We are concerned that the provisions of this bill undermine our efforts and slow our progress toward a clean energy future. **Please vote NO on the Jobs and Energy Omnibus.** Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Alliance for Sustainability
Clean Water Action - Minnesota
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Environment Minnesota
Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Friends of the Mississippi River

Izaak Walton League – MN Division
Land Stewardship Project
Lutheran Advocacy - Minnesota
Minnesota Native Plant Society
Minnesota Ornithologists Union
MN350
Renewing the Countryside
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
Sierra Club – North Star Chapter

