



Governor Mark Dayton
Lt. Governor Tina Smith
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.,
St. Paul, MN 55155

May 16, 2017

Dear Governor Dayton and Lt. Governor Smith:

We, the undersigned organizations and the citizens we represent, want to express our gratitude to you for vetoing the **Jobs and Energy Omnibus Bill**. We agree the most controversial policies in the bill focus on energy, as you stated in your veto letter. We agree the bill contained several provisions that would reverse a decade of progress in creating a clean-energy economy in Minnesota. Thank you for saying no to this legislation.

As legislators return to put together another Jobs and Energy Omnibus bill, we hope you will continue to oppose any provisions that would:

- Recast the mission of the Xcel Energy Renewable Development Fund from research and development of renewable energy in Minnesota to non-state specified grid modernization or other vague “innovative energy projects.” **(Article 10, Sections 4, 5, 6, 28, 29 and 44.)**
- Relax Minnesota’s Solar Energy Standard to allow medium-sized utilities to count their own large projects toward targets for community-based solar. This provision would overturn a clear and unambiguous decision by the Public Utilities Commission. **(Article 10, Section 13, pages 173-174.)**
- Reduce the regulatory authority of the PUC and eliminate safeguards for resolution of consumer disputes with rural co-op and municipal utilities. You already have vetoed a bill containing this language earlier in the legislative session. **(Article 10, Section 10, pages 171-172.)**
- Eliminate the popular Made in Minnesota solar rebate program. Made in Minnesota has spurred the creation of 495 jobs, with projections for an additional 1,485 jobs over its lifetime. **(Article 10, Sections 2, 4, 30 and 43.)**
- Exempt small utilities from participating in energy savings and efficiency programs. **(Article 10, Sections 16-21, pages 175-185.)**

Individually and in combination, these provisions would reverse the highly visible progress the state has made -- much of it under your administration’s leadership. The

Union of Concerned Scientists now ranks Minnesota 11th nationwide and second in the Midwest in building momentum toward the economic, environmental and health benefits of a clean-energy future. That momentum was evident recently as Minnesota's capacity to generate electricity from solar grew 80 percent in the first quarter of this year, thanks to growing demand in both commercial and residential sectors.

Your administration again modeled responsible leadership in proposing to increase the Renewable Energy Standard to 50 percent by 2030. If passed, the provisions within the Omnibus bill would threaten our capacity to reach that goal. They would send a clear signal to solar businesses that Minnesota is no longer a welcoming state even as renewable energy investment worldwide has exceeded fossil-fuel investment every year since 2013.

The provisions targeting renewable energy would hurt our state by curtailing what has been a driver for growth. The solar segment contributed \$1 billion to the state's economy in 2016. Meanwhile, solar jobs have grown 44 percent statewide and 25 percent nationwide since 2015.

Further, the impact to clean energy of the misguided policy reflected in these provisions would create additional barriers in Greater Minnesota, in effect creating a tiered system of access, reinforcing the perception of a rural-urban divide and continuing to block low-income Minnesotans from realizing benefits. This legislation discriminates against clean energy users in Greater Minnesota.

Finally, the timing of attempts to reverse Minnesota's progress on clean energy is particularly disappointing in light of news that the level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere reached a record high in April. Minnesotans are well-informed about the risks of climate change. That's why 71 percent of urban residents and an equal 71 percent of rural residents favor efforts to increase production of clean energy¹ -- exactly contrary to the outcome of the Omnibus bill provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to document our very serious concerns with these provisions under consideration in the **Jobs and Energy Omnibus Bill**.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Alliance for Sustainability
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
Center for Biological Diversity
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Friends of the Mississippi River
Institute for Local Self Reliance
Izaak Walton League – Minnesota Division
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Lower Phalen Creek Project

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light
Minnesota Native Plant Society
Minnesota Ornithologists Union
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
MN350
Pesticide Action Network
Pollinate Minnesota
Renewing the Countryside
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
TakeAction Minnesota*
Transit for Livable Communities

* denotes not a member of MEP

¹ Statewide phone poll conducted February 1-5, 2017 by the bi-partisan polling team Public Opinion Strategies and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates.