



clean energy
economy mn

October 19, 2017

Legislative Energy Commission
State Office Building, Basement Hearing Room
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: Examination of Wind Energy Siting Issues, Including Local Considerations and Health Impacts, and Information on H.F. 2170 (Draskowski)/S.F. 1906 (Goggin)

Dear Members,

Clean Energy Economy Minnesota (CEEM) writes today in support of Minnesota's nation-leading wind energy industry—a market currently ranked seventh in the country by the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA). CEEM recommends that the Legislative Energy Commission (LEC) continue to support Minnesota's burgeoning wind energy industry because the growth of this sector will have positive, lasting impacts on local economies in Greater Minnesota and on Minnesota's economy as a whole.

First, the wind industry in Minnesota creates thousands of jobs. Approximately 4,000 Minnesotans are employed in wind-related jobs across the state. Notably, wages in this industry are 42 percent higher than the statewide average according to a 2014 analysis conducted by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). As of 2016, nearly 6.8 billion dollars have been invested into local wind projects in Minnesota, stimulating rural economic development via new tax revenue, providing income to landowners, and creating thousands of good-paying jobs that will support local communities, businesses, and families.

Second, strong public policies are vital to Minnesota's competitiveness in the national clean energy economy. Due to overwhelming public support for wind energy in Iowa—and a regulatory environment conducive to attracting and siting clean energy projects—Iowa outranks Minnesota in wind energy production and competitiveness. The policies created at the Minnesota legislature send strong market signals to developers that Minnesota is either open for business or is unfriendly to future projects and the significant investments that accompany them. Thus, decisions and recommendations developed in legislative bodies like the LEC have significant impacts on clean energy businesses that seek to strengthen Minnesota's economy for years to come.

Third, the growth of the wind industry in Minnesota is necessary for Minnesota to meet its clean energy goals. The year 2017 marks the ten year anniversary of the Next Generation Energy Act, an overwhelmingly bipartisan legislative accomplishment that set a standard for Minnesota utilities to provide 25 percent of their electrical generation from renewable sources by the year 2025. Minnesota is on track to meet, and even exceed, that goal if the clean energy industry in Minnesota is supported by strong, market-based policies and regulations.

Overall, Minnesota's economy is thriving due to the diversity of the state's clean energy industry. The wind energy sector is a vital component of this market. The LEC should support policies that do not infringe on the continued growth of this industry. Instead, the LEC should propose policies that unlock further economic prosperity in the clean energy sector to create jobs, strengthen Minnesota's competitive position, and continue on a path toward meeting Minnesota's clean energy goals.

Sincerely,

Gregg Mast
Executive Director