

Annual Report

2014



Fresh Energy

PRACTICAL POLICY.
BRIGHTER FUTURE.

DEAR FRIENDS OF FRESH ENERGY

Each year, as I sit down to write this letter, it always gives me great pleasure to reflect on what I should share with you—our partners, supporters, and donors.

The most obvious approach would be to give you a full inventory of our successes over the last year—there have been more than a few. I could also give you an insight into the exciting momentum we have built in 2014 toward victories we hope for in 2015.

But there's just so much going on! Exciting milestones in energy codes for new residential and commercial buildings; progress toward a stronger transmission grid for wind power; a terrific new partnership with Minnesota's top nonprofit housing developers to make affordable housing more energy-efficient; coalition-building for clean energy jobs; and to keep Minnesota on the move in transportation. But you'll have to visit with us to learn about them all, because this annual report will just be a sampler of a few of our top successes in 2014.

In these pages, we will dive a little deeper into how we put your values into practice in 2014: How Fresh Energy led the charge on implementing Minnesota's new solar power laws; how Fresh Energy found bipartisan enthusiasm for helping utilities promote electric vehicles and refuel them at times when demand for energy is low; how Fresh Energy shapes and drives the work to reduce carbon pollution from coal-fired power plants, and strives to place Minnesota near the very top of states leading in implementing the federal Clean Power Plan.

They're all great topics. After all, it's a remarkable time for clean energy. The cost of wind power continues to fall—over 40 percent since 2009. Soon, electricity from new wind farms will cost less than existing coal generation without any government incentives. Similarly, the cost of solar electric panels has fallen 80 percent in five years. With Fresh Energy intensely focused on further cutting costs, such as permitting and installation and acquiring customers, solar power for your home or business will soon cost no more than your current electricity bill.

In introducing our 2014 annual report, I'm extremely proud of the fact that 100 percent of our staff and board have joined you as donors to Fresh Energy.

Every single one of us—from the admin folks to the communications team to the board volunteers—is committed and ready for the work ahead.

As a fellow Fresh Energy donor, you have my pledge that your investment in us is always under

our close stewardship and care. We work every day to maximize the benefit of your support and work for the values you cherish. We deeply appreciate having you on our team, and I look forward to our continued partnership over the coming years.

As always, thanks for everything you do for Fresh Energy. You make our work possible.



Michael Noble
Executive Director







WHAT WE DO

Fresh Energy's overarching goal is to shape and drive progress toward a strong and prosperous Minnesota energy economy, and lead the Midwest's critical role in our nation's transition to highly efficient clean energy and transportation systems.

To accomplish this goal, we concentrate our efforts in the following six key areas: increasing renewable energy and energy efficiency, expanding transmission for renewables, improving transportation and the built environment in our communities; retiring coal plants, and ultimately regulating and ratcheting down carbon pollution.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Fresh Energy advances Minnesota policies that require increased use of renewable energy, such as wind and solar. In 2014, we intervened in multiple administrative processes, including utility planning and rate cases, working to get the renewable energy details right.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Fresh Energy pursues policies that make our economy more efficient—saving consumers money and cutting carbon emissions. In 2014, we worked to make sure that Minnesota’s utility energy efficiency programs are strong and effective. We intervened in utility rate cases and resource planning to speed the transition to a new utility business model that rewards efficiency and uses best technology options.

TRANSMISSION

Fresh Energy builds coalitions across multiple Midwestern states to secure the transmission infrastructure needed for a large scale transition to clean energy. In 2014, Fresh Energy successfully advocated for a 100-mile line that will provide a crucial outlet for wind development in the Buffalo Ridge region—Minnesota’s best wind resource. We also helped advance other important transmission connections in Wisconsin and Iowa as well, by working to address concerns and pave the way to regulatory approvals.

TRANSPORTATION

Fresh Energy promotes innovative transportation and land-use policies that will help speed the transition to a cleaner transportation system and reduce our reliance on oil. Minnesota’s transportation system is in need of a long-term funding source in order to maintain our existing roads and bridges and support future investments, especially public transit and bicycle and walking infrastructure. In 2014, the Move MN campaign brought together more than 200 organizations to advocate for the necessary funding and we will work to keep the coalition unified to win in 2015.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Fresh Energy pursues policies that make our built environment more efficient—saving consumers money and cutting carbon emissions. In 2014, Fresh Energy led a new partnership on improving energy efficiency in affordable multi-unit housing and advocated for the common sense disclosure of

energy use data to spur additional efficiency. Our long campaign to improve the standard energy code for new buildings came to a successful end, and after the code is adopted in February 2015, we will shift to new strategies to assure its successful implementation.

COAL AND CARBON REDUCTION

Fresh Energy promotes tough state and national laws and standards that lead to deep, permanent reductions in pollution from coal power plants and industries and make Minnesota a leader in the clean energy economy. In 2014, Fresh Energy made big strides in replacing coal power plants with cleaner energy through analysis, advocacy, and public outreach.

MIDWEST ENERGY NEWS

Fresh Energy publishes *Midwest Energy News*, an online news source that combines the best content from the region and original reporting. A go-to source of information for leaders in government, businesses, the media, and nonprofits, *Midwest Energy News* is surfacing crucial stories and shaping the narrative on the transition to clean energy in a way that bolsters the efforts of multiple interests working for cleaner energy and transportation systems.

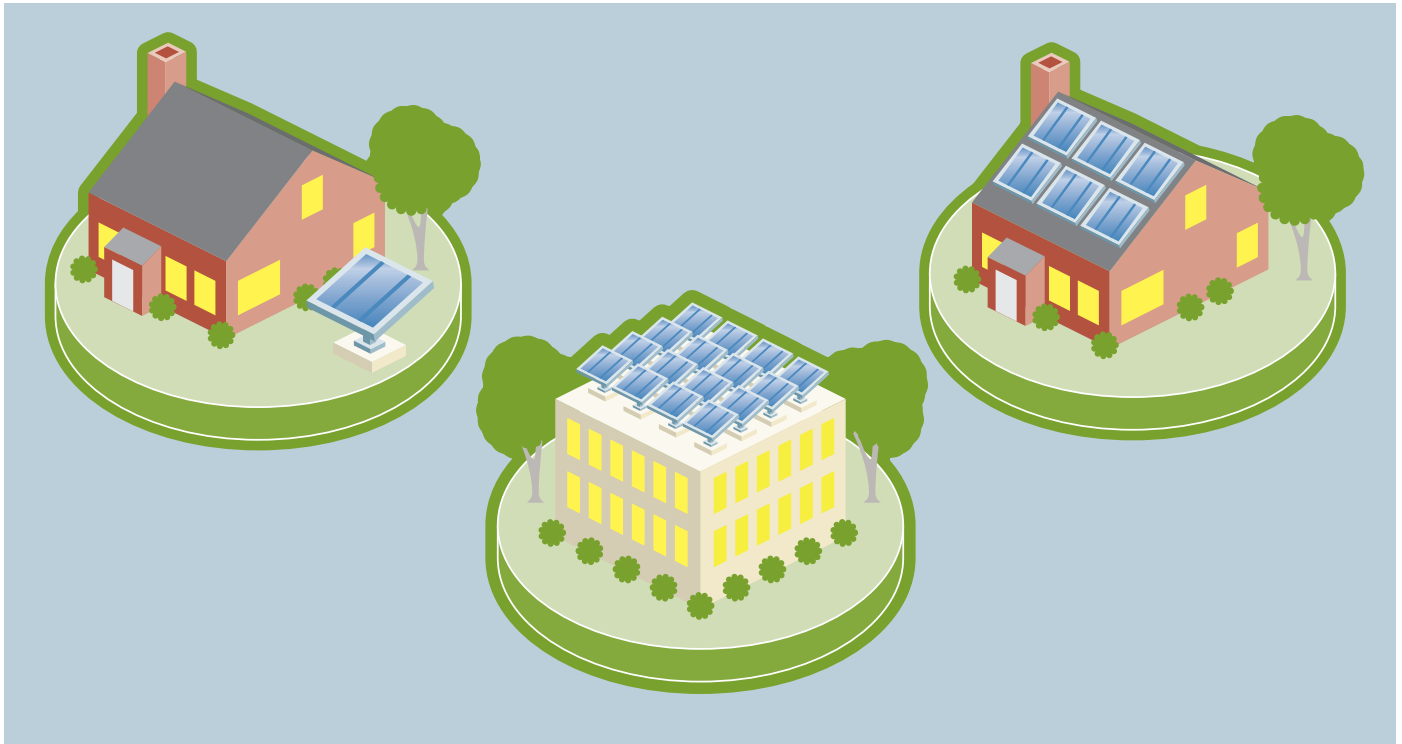
Turning widely-held economic and environmental ideals into smart energy policy, Fresh Energy is making measurable progress toward a strong, prosperous energy economy.

VISION

An economy we thrive in and energy that ensures our well-being.

MISSION

Shape and drive realistic, visionary energy policies that benefit all.



MINNESOTA'S SOLAR BOOM

A leading national solar industry analyst spoke at a Fresh Energy forum, telling the audience that Minnesota might not have the largest market for solar energy in America, but the rules are shaping up to create the best market design. Here's how we helped.

COMMUNITY SOLAR

In 2013, Fresh Energy played a leading advocacy role in getting Minnesota's legislative leaders to adopt the strongest set of solar policies in the Midwest, including a clear legislative framework for community solar projects. Because of our success, Xcel Energy was required to propose a community solar plan to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

In 2014, the PUC approved Xcel's proposal—with improvements advocated by Fresh Energy—that allows more project flexibility and reduces unnecessary barriers and transaction costs. While we salute rural electric coops for pioneering community solar in Minnesota, Xcel's program announced in December 2014 enables any customer with an electric bill to participate in a solar project and get a fair credit on their bill for the energy produced. You don't have to have your own sunny roof or open land to do solar any more, thanks to Fresh Energy.

VALUE OF SOLAR TARIFF

In 2014, Minnesota established its "value of solar" method, more precisely determining the value of electricity from solar systems on homes and businesses. If utilities adopt the rate, businesses and homeowners who produce solar energy will get a fair bill credit for energy they produce. As Executive Director Michael Noble said, "Once utilities credit people's bills fairly for the solar electricity they produce, soon everyone who wants solar can have it."

MARKET TRANSPARENCY

Fresh Energy worked with utilities, solar producers, and the Chamber of Commerce to advocate that the state should collect and publish a database showing the cost of solar and other small power projects. Keeping individual deals private, a public database allows customers, businesses, and policy makers to access information they need to make informed decisions about solar for investments and public policy.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

A growing part of Minnesota's clean energy future

As the number of electric vehicle and plug-in hybrid (EV) owners in Minnesota grew to reach 100,000 in 2013, Minnesota became seventh in the nation for EV adoption. In 2014, Fresh Energy secured critical policy allowing utilities, customers, and society to gain economic and environmental benefits from increased EV deployment.

EVs in Minnesota take advantage of the increasingly cleaner regional electricity mix as we ratchet down coal and ramp up efficiency and renewables. And now it's easier in Minnesota than in any state to fuel your car with 100 percent wind or solar power. Your next bumper sticker can say: Wind Powers This Car.

EV deployment leads to lower battery prices, better battery technology, and more energy storage—important parts of our clean energy future. Additionally, advancements in electric motor development will lead to better, quieter, and pollution-free vehicles like motorcycles, snowmobiles, and jet skis.

In June 2014, Minnesota adopted a statewide standard for EV refueling—the first in the nation—and ensured EVs would be a prevalent part of the state's clean energy future. Fresh Energy's work resulted in bipartisan legislation that included a discounted rate for EV refueling, an option of zero-emissions refueling with renewable energy, an option for state agencies to have electric fleet vehicles, and an opportunity for utilities to become champions for EV adoption. This landmark legislation is a win, win, win—big savings for consumers, an extraordinary market opportunity for utilities, and timely action for society, reducing the risks of oil dependence while cutting carbon pollution.



NEW STAFF

In the past fiscal year, Fresh Energy has made exciting additions to its staff, bringing a multitude of valuable and diverse skills to advance the mission.

Shawntera M. Hardy is director of Fresh Energy's transportation and the built environment program, with significant prior experience from HealthPartners as government relations manager as well as from the City of Saint Paul as a planner. Shawntera has a long history working with leaders of diverse interests across sectors, from collaborating on such key projects as Saint Paul's comprehensive plan, helping metro communities prepare for the Central Corridor light rail investment, and serving as liaison on a major federal bicycling infrastructure investment. Shawntera is a board member for the Saint Paul YWCA, Minneapolis Parks Foundation, as well as EverybodyWins! Minnesota.

Rob Davis joined the team as strategic communications director with a background in media relations and marketing services from his consulting practice, Pioneer Public Relations. Before this, he was the director of external relations and communications at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and led communications and media planning work for fast-growing companies as a senior counselor at Haberman. Rob is a two-time recipient of the Teresa Du Bois Exline Award for Best Practices in Communications and Marketing and is a graduate of Macalester College.

Allen Gleckner is focused on distributed clean energy policy and aligning wholesale electricity market rules and regional transmission planning towards broader deployment of clean electricity and energy efficiency resources. Allen has a BA in political science from Washington University in St. Louis and a JD from Stanford Law School. Allen has experience in solar policy, transmission planning, and natural resource protection from his work as staff attorney at the Environmental Law & Policy Center.



HISTORIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR CARBON REDUCTION

Minnesota is a national leader in clean energy, with Fresh Energy's policy leadership helping to create thousands of jobs and protect human health. To stay a leader, we must retire uneconomical coal-burning power plants and replace them with clean, efficient energy. Governor Dayton has laid out a vision for Minnesota to move away from coal-burning power plants to cleaner forms of energy. In 2014, Fresh Energy made big strides in replacing dirty power plants with cleaner energy through analysis, advocacy, and public outreach around three historic opportunities to reduce carbon pollution.

SETTING RESPONSIBLE NATIONAL LIMITS ON CARBON POLLUTION

In June 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the Clean Power Plan, the first-ever national limits on carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants. Burning coal is, by far, the biggest source of carbon pollution in Minnesota and the nation. These commonsense standards will cut dangerous carbon pollution from the power sector by approximately 30 percent from 2005 levels and will reduce smog and soot pollution by 25 percent, saving an estimated 6,000 lives every year. Fresh Energy's outreach and communications team created a steady drumbeat of support for the Clean Power Plan across Minnesota, including editorial support from around the state and dozens of published opinion pieces, news articles, and commentaries from local leaders. Fresh Energy spoke about the Clean Power Plan at 50 events in 2014, and our members submitted thousands of supportive comments to the EPA. Fresh Energy serves on the state group



that will determine how Minnesota meets the Clean Power Plan requirements while creating jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy sectors.

REAL HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS OF ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Minnesota passed a landmark law in 1993—one of Fresh Energy’s first public policy victories—that requires regulators to consider health and environmental costs that are external to the price of fossil fuel generation when evaluating the economics of future investments. These externalities values have not been updated in 20 years and are no longer scientifically valid. This year, regulators voted to support Fresh Energy’s motion to update these cost numbers in order to ensure that Minnesota makes sound decisions on how to meet future energy needs. University of Minnesota economists showed that burning coal costs Minnesotans at least \$2.1 billion each year in health and environmental damages. Fresh Energy’s actions will ensure that the state uses current externalities data to avoid making hundreds of millions of dollars of bad investments in old coal plants.



REPLACING MINNESOTA’S LARGEST CARBON POLLUTER

Minnesota will soon decide the future of its largest coal-fired power plant and biggest carbon polluter—Xcel Energy’s Sherco 1 and 2 plants in Becker. These coal plants, built in the 1970s, emit more than 8 million tons of carbon dioxide every year. This year, Fresh Energy secured the requirement that Xcel Energy compare the full costs of continuing to burn coal at Sherco 1 and 2 with the full costs of switching to clean energy. Starting in January 2015, the Public Utilities Commission will scrutinize that analysis, which will include retiring and replacing these coal units by the year 2020. Fresh Energy will advocate for the replacement of these uneconomic plants and will demonstrate strong public support for these clean energy advances.



BENCHMARKING PAVES THE WAY FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota has long been a leader in clean energy and efficiency, so it's no surprise that in February 2013, Minneapolis became the first city in the Midwest to adopt a benchmarking ordinance requiring large commercial buildings to report and publicly disclose their energy and water consumption.

Benchmarking helps building owners compare their energy use to that of other buildings and identify opportunities to save energy and money. The comparison work helps businesses and building owners create local jobs and prioritize energy efficiency decisions.

As of June 1, 2014, operators of all commercial buildings 100,000 square feet and larger in Minneapolis are required to report their energy and water use to the city. Buildings that are 50,000 square feet and larger will be required to begin benchmarking in 2015.



Minneapolis has released its first annual report on public buildings since the benchmarking policy was passed. The report contains 2012 results for buildings owned by the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minneapolis Public Schools, and Hennepin County, and documents more than 21 million square feet in more than 100 public buildings. The following results show that the ordinance was a great decision for Minneapolis:

- If all of these buildings reduced their energy use by 10 percent, more than \$2.5 million in energy costs and over 15,000 metric tons of carbon pollution would be avoided.
- Between 2009 and 2012, energy efficiency improvements in city buildings have already resulted in more than \$6 million in energy savings.

Additionally, Minnesota served as a model on the national stage when the Better Buildings Act of 2014—which encourages policies similar to Minneapolis' benchmarking ordinance—was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill had strong bipartisan support within Minnesota's Congressional delegation, with seven of eight representatives, both Democrat and Republican, voting in its favor.

Fresh Energy has been involved in the benchmarking issue for many years, and will continue to advocate for increased efficiency measures in buildings—both residential and commercial—across Minnesota.



AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Reporting for fiscal year 2013-14, information is based on the certified audit by Mayer Hoffman McCann P.C. The complete audit is available upon request.

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,226,524
Investments	617,964
Promises to Give Receivable	215,209
Accounts Receivable	3,829
Prepaid Expenses	27,362
Equipment	13,403
Total Assets	\$2,122,810

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities	\$206,672
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NET ASSETS

Designated for Operating Reserve	\$573,115
Designated for New Opportunity Fund	110,529
Designated for Endowment Purposes	75,000
Undesignated	57,317
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	740,961
Temporarily Restricted	1,175,177
Total Net Assets	1,916,138
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$2,122,810

Statement of Activities

SUPPORT

Contributions and Grants	\$2,189,568
Interest and Dividend Income	10,626
In-kind Contributions	2,457
Unrealized Gains (Losses) on Securities	13,642
Other Revenue	8,938
Total Support and Revenue	\$2,225,231

EXPENSES

Energy, Efficiency, and Climate	\$857,776
Midwest Communications	460,485
Transportation and the Built Environment	435,064
Hosted Employees	67,172
Administration	407,841
Fundraising	111,880
Total Expenses	\$2,340,218
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	(\$114,987)

DONOR LIST

We thank the following members who generously donated between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

POWER CIRCLES

Fresh Energy's Power Circles recognize the leading individual, business, and organizational members who make generous unrestricted contributions of \$1,000 and above each fiscal year. Through their commitment, Fresh Energy is able to promote laws and rules to create a clean energy system that sustains our economy, human health, and the environment.

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Members contributing a total of \$10,000 or more in a fiscal year.

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Nell and Chris Smith, in memory of Tom Crosby
*This year, we celebrate the life and mourn the passing of Malcolm McLean, a renaissance man with a distinguished career in the Foreign Service, and as President of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, President of the United Arts Council, co-founder of Compatible Technologies International and a generous member of Fresh Energy.

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