



**TO:** Minnesota media outlets  
**FROM:** Fresh Energy  
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## **Xcel Energy to include Pollinator-Friendly Scorecard in Solar RFP Process**



**Fresh Energy**

Fresh Energy applauds Xcel Energy's move to include a role for Minnesota's [Pollinator-Friendly Solar Scorecard](#) in its future solar request for proposals process.

Unanimously established in law in 2016 with support from the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Minnesota Farmers Union, Audubon Minnesota, Fresh Energy, and a broad and diverse coalition of pollinator advocates, the Pollinator-Friendly Solar Act established a set of fair, flexible, and science-based standards for what constitutes "beneficial to pollinators" in the managed landscape of a solar farm.

Energy procurement is deeply technical and analytic work that ultimately relies on decisions made by people with families, values, aspirations, and love for the natural world.

Pollinator-friendly solar is a win-win-win solution that creates more clean, home-grown renewable energy as well as acres of healthy habitat for pollinators and wildlife. Today's action is a clear example of how Xcel Energy employees are fulfilling the company's motto of Responsible by Nature.

## **Audubon Minnesota**



“The use of this scorecard by a major Midwestern energy producer sets a good example for developers across the country. Xcel is the first utility to formally require the scorecard in its solar RFP process and we hope more utilities follow suit. Renewable energy is helping to reduce the impacts of climate change on birds and their habitats and we are enthused to support the responsible development of new energy sites.”

## **Monarch Joint Venture**

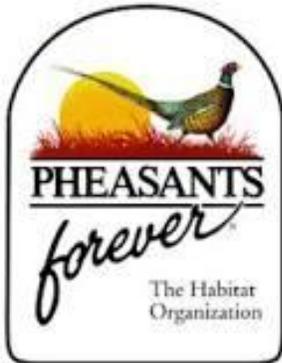


“The Monarch Joint Venture is a national partnership of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses and academic programs working together to conserve the monarch butterfly migration. Xcel Energy’s decision to direct its potential partners to make intentional decisions about the seed mixes used around the solar farms that produce energy for its customers is encouraging news that has the potential to meaningfully benefit monarchs as well as other butterflies and pollinators.”



## **Minnesota Farmers Union**

“Minnesota’s Department of Agriculture has highlighted the critical role of pollinators to agriculture and identified them as an irreplaceable public resource. Establishing perennial, flowering, and low-maintenance meadows under and around ground-mounted solar arrays is beneficial to pollinators, while also building healthy soils and capturing stormwater. Minnesota Farmers Union applauds Xcel Energy’s decision to include Minnesota’s scorecard for pollinator-friendly solar in its energy procurement process into the future.”



## Pheasants Forever

“Over the past two decades pollinators have suffered a tragic decline in populations due to habitat loss. As a habitat conservation organization, Pheasants Forever has taken a national leadership role in the effort to put pollinator habitat on the ground. In the last 5 years, we have completed 12,417 pollinator habitat projects with our volunteers committing more than 40,000 hours of their time. However, there is still much more to do, and we applaud Xcel Energy in showing their commitment to help the plight of pollinators by drawing attention to the plants, that research has shown thrive under and around the solar panels that generate clean energy for its customers. The end result of this will provide butterflies and bees more places to feed and high-quality habitat for pheasants to nest, raise broods and forage.”

## POLLINATOR PARTNERSHIP

### Pollinator Partnership

Protect their lives. Preserve ours. “Protection and conservation of pollinators doesn’t require much—just acres and acres of flowering plants and clean food and water sources. Pollinator Partnership applauds Xcel Energy for its decision to include a pollinator-friendly solar scorecard in its future solar RFP process. The environment and the economy both win when companies like Xcel lead the way to provide both low-cost energy *and* high-quality habitat for pollinators. That’s a victory for all of us.”



for Invertebrate Conservation

## **Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation**

“Pollinators are in decline, and wildflower plantings on solar farms can help provide the nutrition and habitat that bees and butterflies need, if established with a wide diversity of native plants. Xcel Energy’s decision to include the Pollinator-Friendly Solar scorecard in solar project bidding is a smart move that will help promote high-quality pollinator habitat growing under and around the panels on solar farms.”