

ENERGYMATTERS



RESOURCE PLANNING IN ACTION KEEPING UTILITIES ON THE CLEAN ENERGY PATH

Fresh Energy is committed to keeping Minnesota on a path to an equitable, affordable, zero-carbon electric grid. In fact, one of our new Strategic Imperatives centers on "decarbonizing the electricity sector in Minnesota."

We know that we can achieve this ambitious goal by dedicating expert staff time and resources to deeply engage in utility Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs). It's through these plans that the public and organizations like Fresh Energy influence utilities to build more renewables, close coal plants, stop investment in fossil gas infrastructure, and more. With three major Minnesota utilities filing IRPs in 2021, it's shaping up to be a crucial year for clean energy progress!

"Three IRPs in one year is a huge undertaking for Fresh Energy, especially because these plans guide how utilities invest in Minnesota's electricity system over the next 15 years," said Michael Noble, executive director of Fresh Energy. "As leaders in the field, our Clean Electricity team does an amazing job balancing expert involvement at venues like the Public Utilities Commission with making these complex subjects accessible to the public via media interviews and blog posts."

Fresh Energy and our partners filed expert comments on Xcel Energy's IRP in early February. In addition to celebrating aspects of the plan such as Xcel's commitment to a 100% carbon-free electricity system, acceleration of coal plant retirements, historic levels of energy efficiency, and increased renewable electricity, we also highlighted areas of the plan that needed improvement.

Most in need of rethinking is Xcel's plan for a new fossil gas plant in Becker, Minnesota. Beyond emitting tons of new greenhouse gases, the plant would cost customers over one billion dollars, thus making the plant an extremely expensive investment in dirty electricity.

Along with Fresh Energy's technical recommendations and expert research into Xcel's generation mix, we are collaborating closely with the Energy Efficiency for All partners to push Xcel to commit to improving equity outcomes through the Integrated Resource Planning process as a whole.

But the work doesn't stop with Xcel Energy. Both Minnesota Power and Otter Tail Power have or are in the process of filing Integrated Resource Plans. Fresh Energy staff will provide analysis and expert comments on each, working to ensure both utilities plan for the future in a way that benefits customers while keeping Minnesota on track to meet its crucial carbon reduction goals.

Read all about Fresh Energy's expert comments on the Xcel IRP at fresh-energy.org/XcelEnergy-IRP or listen to our episode of "Decarbonize: The Clean Energy Podcast" on the subject.

Take Action!

Xcel Energy customers can engage in Xcel's IRP using our easy online tool. Check out fresh-energy.org/take-action for details and stay tuned to this page for updates on the Minnesota Power and Otter Tail Power IRPs.



It is impossible to overestimate the impact that the extreme weather events in Texas and other areas of the southern United States will have on the American psyche as we stare down the effects of the climate crisis.

As it happens, my wife Patsy and I were in Austin, Texas, during the very worst of the weather emergency. What started as a road trip to escape winter in Minnesota turned into an experience I will never forget.

Between boiling our drinking water and staying warm during days of rolling blackouts, I had lots of time to think about Fresh Energy's work. There's one thing that became crystal clear: **Fresh Energy's 30 years of laser focus and pressure on MISO (our grid operator), Minnesota utilities, and state agencies to prioritize grid updates and maintenance was more important than we could have possibly imagined.**

Minnesota is not Texas and our electric grid is properly weatherized to manage severe weather. But investments in transmission, distribution, storage, and grid resiliency are going to be ever more important as we transition to a carbon-free electric grid that increasingly powers transportation and buildings.

At Fresh Energy, we are redoubling our commitment to Minnesota's carbon-free future. Our grid must be prepared to do more and Fresh Energy will be here every step of the way.

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MID-SESSION LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Fresh Energy's Public Affairs team is tracking more than 150 energy- and climate-related bills at the Minnesota Legislature and nine staff have already provided oral testimony—a new record!

Of the many bills we are working on, we are most excited about the 100% carbon-free electricity bill, the Energy

Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act, and multiple electric bus bills that prioritize vulnerable communities.

While we have dedicated hundreds of staff hours to boosting clean energy policies good for all Minnesotans, we have spent just as much time on defense—especially related to Clean Cars Minnesota. Learn more about our legislative priorities at fresh-energy.org/2021-legislature.

ENERGY CODE ADVANCEMENTS IN THE WORKS



The energy efficiency baseline for new buildings in Minnesota is determined by a set of energy codes. The strength of these codes affects the energy consumption and carbon impact of buildings for generations to come.

As a nonprofit leader working to move the needle on climate through building policy, we are pleased to

be working on two major code-related projects. The first is a bill at the Minnesota Legislature that would require new large multifamily and commercial buildings to be net-zero by 2036, and the second is an ongoing rulemaking process at the Department of Labor and Industry to adopt an updated large multifamily and commercial energy standard on an earlier schedule. Learn more at fresh-energy.org/code-advancements.

PLANNING EV-READY BUILDINGS



Minnesota is poised to dramatically reduce transportation energy consumption, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions by shifting to electric vehicles (EVs). EV infrastructure must be considered in every building project and industry professionals like architects have a key role to play. To help them get

up to speed, Fresh Energy's Jukka Kukkonen is offering a course that provides Continuing Education credits on the subject. Interested? Email elevation.mn@gmail.com for details.

AN EQUITABLE AND JUST ENERGY TRANSITION



Too often throughout history, communities including Black, Indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+, individuals in rural geographies, and many others have been left behind in times of transformational change. As the energy sector strives to aggressively decarbonize to mitigate the impacts of climate change, it has an obligation to learn from past transitions when policy choices excluded marginalized communities at best, and actively harmed them at worst.

As Fresh Energy works to electrify the economy and ensure an equitable and just energy transition, we are asking questions that seem simple but are complex in practice. Who will benefit? Who will be negatively impacted? What will be lost? What is necessary for a just transition?

Alongside Fresh Energy's external policy and legislative work, we are also centering equity and justice internally. Here are our most recent highlights:

The Energy Access and Equity (EAE) team is growing.

To achieve Fresh Energy's ambitious decarbonization goals, we've grown the EAE team to meet this crucial moment for clean energy and climate action. Janiece Watts, Mari Ojeda, and Ben Passer (pictured right) are advancing our regulatory, administrative, and legislative advocacy in clean energy with a

focus on equity and access, coalition partnerships, and solutions that create a clean energy future that benefits all.



New board members bring fresh perspectives.

In 2020, we welcomed four new members: Risikat Adesaogun, Erika Bailey-Johnson, Angelica Imhoede, and Kristel Porter. These four women bring diverse personal and career backgrounds to Fresh Energy leadership, along with varied regional and community perspectives. Get to know them at fresh-energy.org/new-board.

Commitment to Anti-Racism.

Expanding upon the work of the staff-led Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Women, Trans, Femme Committees, we published a public "Commitment to Anti-Racism." The policy outlines actions Fresh Energy is taking in our work to demonstrate our commitment to transforming the systems that cause systemic inequities and to create the profound change that is needed in Minnesota and beyond. Read the policy at fresh-energy.org/anti-racism.



PASSION AND PURPOSE

Fresh Energy board member and Power Circle donor Deepinder Singh found his passion and purpose as a new parent with a common problem: lack of sleep. When he realized that his young daughter was waking frequently in the night because she was cold in her bedroom, he used his skills as an engineer to make his home more comfortable and energy efficient.

As a result of this home improvement project, Deepinder founded 75F, where he serves as CEO. "I wanted to take my background in electronics and computing and apply it to this problem I saw. I realized that by harnessing technology advances and innovations, we can redistribute heat and energy in our buildings to stay more comfortable and have the added bonus of saving energy."

Deepinder shares Fresh Energy's vision of an equitable, carbon-neutral future and is making an incredible impact at 75F by helping commercial buildings become more efficient. But you don't need to change careers to make a difference. "Fresh Energy is one of the most important voices that we have, and by supporting them you are speeding our transition to a more efficient world. It's so important for our long-term future."

Join Deepinder by making a Power Circle contribution of \$1,000 or more today. Please contact Meggie LaValley at lavalley@fresh-energy.org.

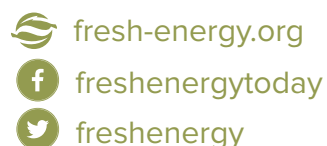


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The transition to an equitable, carbon-neutral economy will bring big changes to our communities. State and federal policies, utility programs, and the overall evolution from a world powered by oil and gas to a clean electricity-powered future play out in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and homes. But it's not just communities adapting to change. Cities, counties, and local institutions are often leading through model projects and Climate Action Plans to shape a new reality.

This summer, Fresh Energy will be hosting a webinar series to raise the question: ***How can we dramatically reduce carbon emissions in a way that improves our communities and benefits everyone?***

Visit fresh-energy.org/energy-community for emerging details on this free series, which will include:

Community Heating and Cooling:

How can district-scale heat and power projects achieve big carbon reductions and new union jobs?

Workforce of the Future:

How can Minnesota ensure broad access to jobs in the clean energy economy?

Authentic Community Engagement:

What is the difference between public input and a co-created climate vision?

Electricity Instead of Gas:

How can communities embrace efficiency and electrification and avoid new fossil gas infrastructure?