

# ENERGY MATTERS

## RENEWABLE ENERGY: WHAT'S NEXT?



Thanks to strong policies and good economics, wind and solar are booming in Minnesota. But if our state is going to achieve its science-based greenhouse gas reduction goals—and if Minnesota is going to actively contribute to making the dramatic carbon reductions we need right now—we need to aim higher.

**Fresh Energy is committed to a bold plan of action: By 2030, 60 percent of Minnesota's electricity must be from wind and solar and half our cars and all our buses should run on clean electricity.** By 2045, we need 100 percent carbon-free electricity powering a completely carbon-neutral economy.

### BIG REGULATORY AND POLICY DECISIONS AHEAD

In the next twelve months, there will be multiple opportunities for Minnesota utilities and decision-makers to double down on carbon reduction and moving more of our economy to renewable electricity.

The state's three investor owned-utility companies—Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power—will be proposing their 15 year integrated resource plans to the Public Utilities Commission. These plans set future direction on meeting forecasted energy demand while also accounting for new technologies and addressing aging infrastructure. Fresh Energy's team of experts is already working hard to build the data-driven case to support bigger investments in wind and solar and the closure of polluting coal plants.

Work at the state legislature will also be crucial, and Fresh Energy is shaping the policy details with a broad coalition of partners to advance progress that creates jobs and prosperity for all Minnesotans as it moves more of our economy to renewable electricity.

### CREATING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

To continue deploying wind and solar at the necessary scale, Minnesota needs an updated grid designed to meet the needs of a new, cleaner energy system. Fresh Energy is working at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, which oversees transmission lines across our region, to advance clean energy expansion in our region. We are also seeing key clean energy transmission lines in Iowa and Wisconsin through to completion—and we are actively rallying support for investment in new infrastructure to bring clean energy to our communities.

There will be many opportunities to voice your support for advancing the next leap forward on renewable electricity in Minnesota.

Visit our Take Action page for the details on what you can do.  
[fresh-energy.org/take-action](https://fresh-energy.org/take-action)



Left to right: Ross Levin, J. Drake Hamilton, Chair Mary Nichols, Teresa Morrow, Michael Noble

Minnesota is paving the way as a renewable energy leader, sentiments echoed in the enthusiasm and support we received at our third annual Benefit Breakfast on October 3, 2018. With over 550 attendees present, we raised an astounding \$304,737 for our clean energy work.

Breakfast keynote Mary Nichols, Chair of the California Air Resources Board, emphasized that electrification is the future—and electric vehicles will drive the change. Clean car policies in California have spurred electric car sales and options for prospective buyers. Today five percent of all cars sold in the state come with an electric plug. Less than one percent of new cars in Minnesota currently run on electricity, but a tipping point is coming fast.

If Minnesota can move forward and join California and other clean car states that have requirements for sales of vehicles with zero emissions, we can massively reduce carbon pollution, improve air quality, and save money.

My promise to you is this: Fresh Energy will advance practical and economic carbon reduction strategies and public policies, and a big 100 percent vision for our future.

EMAIL: [noble@fresh-energy.org](mailto:noble@fresh-energy.org)

TWITTER: @nobleideas

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AND OTHER STORIES  
AT [FRESH-ENERGY.ORG](http://FRESH-ENERGY.ORG)

## TENANT-LANDLORD TOOLKIT ROLLOUT



With rising housing costs and a tight rental market, more residents in Minnesota are feeling pinched, and energy costs can make or break their ability to make ends meet. Lower-income families have a particularly high energy burden, often paying more than 30 percent of their income for housing and utilities combined. In partnership with the Community Stabilization Project and others, Fresh Energy is working to improve the efficiency

of rental housing and increase transparency of energy costs with a focus on Saint Paul. This project elevates renter voices and includes a toolkit for use by both landlord and renters, set to release this year.

## MINNESOTA IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY ARENA



While Fresh Energy policy work focuses on the state of Minnesota, we aim for global impact. This summer, our staff experts visited Germany as part of the Climate-Smart Municipalities partnership between Minnesota and the German state of North Rhine Westphalia and the Berlin Seminar. We gained insights into how local governments can advance clean energy progress and were thrilled to be traveling with leaders from Duluth, Elk River, Morris,

Rochester, and Warren. This winter, Fresh Energy's J. Drake Hamilton will be representing Fresh Energy in the United Nations 24th Annual Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), highlighting our state's progress on the path to deep decarbonization.

## BUILDING KNOWLEDGE OF METRO AREA REALTORS



Building super-efficient homes and commercial spaces reduces energy waste and boosts cost savings. Fresh Energy is partnering with realtors and the greater real estate industry to share our expertise in energy efficiency and energy-reduction measures. Our buildings expert Ben Rabe is holding three lunch-and-learn sessions with real estate professionals on better valuing high performance homes, which improves the ability of listing agents to

publicize these homes on the greater Twin Cities Multiple Listing Service (MLS)—a win for businesses, homebuyers, and energy!

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ENERGY CONSERVATION



Energy efficiency is a proven strategy for saving money, cutting carbon pollution, and avoiding expensive new power plants. New technologies, including LED lightbulbs and smart thermostats, are helping people cut their electricity use. Emerging strategies, such as rates designed to reduce electricity use at peak times of day, are improving our energy system overall.

While it's a changing landscape, energy conservation remains vitally important and Fresh Energy is working to shape and drive a plan for efficiency of the future. Here are three key issues involved:

**Customer opportunities:** Right now, the state's Conservation Improvement Program requires Minnesota utilities to offer programs such as rebates and incentives for energy efficient appliances, light bulbs, and building insulation. As we look at new strategies, these end-use energy savings programs should be preserved.

**Effective programs for people earning low incomes:** Families and energy customers that earn less pay a disproportionate amount of their monthly income on energy bills. Earners face additional obstacles, such as financing and communication barriers. We need to make sure no one gets left behind by strengthening low-income utility spending requirements and utilizing innovative approaches that ensure opportunities for all.

**Electrification:** Switching from fossil fuels, such as propane, to clean electricity has numerous benefits for our energy system and environment. As we consider the new era of energy conservation, Fresh Energy is working to effectively incorporate electrification, for example, shaping efficiency programs that include rebates and incentives for cold climate air-source heat pumps that utilize abundant overnight wind energy.

There will be several opportunities to advance these goals in our state and with individual utilities. Stay tuned for updates as this exciting work moves forward!

Join Bird and her family in becoming a Power Circle member by contacting our individual giving director Meggie LaValley at: [Lavalley@Fresh-Energy.org](mailto:Lavalley@Fresh-Energy.org).



## SUPPORTING FRESH ENERGY IS A FAMILY PRIORITY

Bird Anderson and her family are fired up for the environment and have made a commitment to act. They first learned about Fresh Energy through a presentation given by our science policy director, J. Drake Hamilton more than ten years ago, and have remained dedicated donors ever since.

Bird's family is all-in for a clean energy economy. "We need to play our part in effecting positive and impactful change beyond just swapping out lightbulbs," she said. "Supporting Fresh Energy with its economically smart policy initiatives meets that aim, and it has the reach that we cannot achieve as individuals."

As Power Circle donors to Fresh Energy, the Anderson family lives out their family priority to positively impact our state's transition to a clean energy economy. Bird and her husband Randy [a former Fresh Energy board member] did even more for the organization this year by becoming Benefit Breakfast table captains. They were delighted to introduce their many enthusiastic friends to Fresh Energy's work. We thank them for their ongoing, generous support of Fresh Energy!




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FEATURE EVENT | POWER PAIRING

## BEYOND GAS:

### HOW CAN WE LIVE BETTER WITH CLEAN ELECTRICITY?



## YOU'RE INVITED!

Join Fresh Energy for a conversation about why we should consider building new homes without natural gas and what it will take to get there.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 2019

7:00 - 8:30 AM

TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB  
300 N MISSISSIPPI RIVER BLVD  
SAINT PAUL, MN 55104

LEARN MORE + REGISTER AT:  
[FRESH-ENERGY.ORG/BEYONDGAS19](http://FRESH-ENERGY.ORG/BEYONDGAS19)



**Bruce Nilles** is well known for leading Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign and has now, as a Senior Fellow at the Rocky Mountain Institute, turned his attention to electrifying the buildings sector.



**Sherri Billimoria** recently authored a ground-breaking report on the economics of electrifying buildings and focuses on low-income communities and energy solutions at the Rocky Mountain Institute's Electricity Practice.