

# ENERGYMATTERS



## THE FUTURE OF GAS IN MINNESOTA

Here in the North Star State, many of us depend upon fossil gas every day. We use it to cook our food, heat our shower water, dry our clothing, and warm our homes and businesses. However, there is irrefutable proof that using fossil gas poses serious health and safety risks—and contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions.

A decades-long pattern of investment and incentivization has locked Minnesota into an unsustainable dependence on fossil gas. With the emissions from fossil gas continuing to skyrocket, our state has been pushed to a crucial inflection point: **we must put these investments under the microscope to map a clean energy future for Minnesota.** Fresh Energy's new Gas Decarbonization program seeks to do just that.

With the passage of the Natural Gas Innovation Act (NGIA) in the spring, the wheels were set in motion to help all Minnesotans gain a better understanding of fossil gas in our state. NGIA established two dockets at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission—these dockets are the first of their kind here in Minnesota and some of only a few in the country.

To tackle the intensive work that these dockets and related initiatives will take, Fresh Energy brought Joe Dammel on board as Director of Gas Decarbonization. Joe comes to Fresh Energy as a technical policy expert with deep experience working on gas-, energy-, and climate-related

policy at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Attorney General's Office, and CenterPoint Energy.

In October, Fresh Energy reached a landmark moment when we filed our first round of comments in the proceeding (Docket No. 21-566) at the Commission. While we know this is only the start of a long process, this moment is cause for celebration. Minnesota has taken a crucial first step in looking at gas decarbonization through the lens of the climate crisis.

In the coming months, Fresh Energy will give Minnesotans and the Commission a robust technical record and policy roadmap. **However, this is just the beginning of a multi-year effort as Fresh Energy, our partners, and other advocacy groups in the state, Minnesota utilities, and everyone who lives here seek to research, understand, and evaluate how we can move beyond our dependence on fossil gas.**

At Fresh Energy, we know this is a golden opportunity to put our fossil gas system under the microscope and use what we learn to help Minnesota swiftly, effectively, and equitably decarbonize. Stay tuned for updates and ways Minnesotans can engage in this process!

Learn how you can help accelerate the energy transition by cutting your dependence on fossil fuel and electrifying your life one appliance, vehicle, and tool at a time. Visit [fresh-energy.org/goelectric](https://fresh-energy.org/goelectric) for ideas and resources.





I love that our Benefit Breakfast comes near the end of the year. Thanks to a virtual crowd of more than 475 guests, I—along with the entire Fresh Energy team—got a big boost of the positive energy we need to look ahead to the coming year and set ambitious goals amid our ongoing public health, climate, and economic emergencies.

This year, we were honored to welcome climate tech entrepreneur Donnel Baird—a rising star in the clean energy and climate solution industry. In our conversation, Donnel emphasized that retrofitting buildings to move them off fossil fuels confronts multiple societal crises by creating new family-supporting jobs, improving indoor air quality, and reducing carbon emissions. I couldn't agree more.

**This is exactly the kind of work we want to see more of right here in Minnesota, and it's why Fresh Energy is committed to driving building policy and crucial energy code updates.** In fact, our very own building performance director, Ben Rabe, has been appointed to an international codes committee to contribute his expertise in achieving greenhouse gas reductions through building code!

I already know that 2022 will be one for the record books because we will be celebrating 30 years of working alongside you for clean energy and climate progress in Minnesota. Thank you for your support.

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## FEDERAL ACTION TO LOCAL CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENTS



We know that clean energy is the cornerstone to taking serious federal action on climate and economic recovery nationally and locally. Along with advocating at the federal level for forward-looking policy solutions to reach net-zero carbon emissions by mid-century, Fresh Energy is working to ensure that a portion of the more than \$2 billion of American Rescue Plan dollars heading to Minnesota cities, counties, and towns is invested toward meaningful, local climate and clean energy action—including zero carbon transportation and equity-focused investments.

## ENERGY ACCESS AND EQUITY 2.0



We're pleased to share that Fresh Energy's Energy Access and Equity team continues to expand its work to ensure that clean energy policy statewide is both equitable and just. Over the next year, the team will be laser-focused on working to reduce the energy burden for under-resourced households, expand access to and affordability of clean transportation for more communities, partner with local governments to set and implement equitable climate action goals, and more. And the team's work is getting national recognition! This fall, Janiece Watts, Fresh Energy's director of culture and partnerships, earned a spot on the 2021 Young, Gifted, and Green 40 Under 40 List—joining an impressive cohort of environmental justice leaders of color.

## ENN REPORTER LAUDED FOR ENERGY SERIES



Energy News Network (ENN) reporter Kathiann Kowalski has been recognized with two Ohio's Best Journalism first place awards for her years-long investigative reporting series unraveling the role of dark money and campaign contributions in Ohio's infamous HB 6 scandal—a \$1 billion bailout for Ohio's two nuclear power plants that was signed into law in 2019. ENN and other media were integral to exposing illegal activity, and journalistic scrutiny remains crucial. Listen to a recent webinar on the topic on Fresh Energy's Decarbonize podcast, and visit [energynews.us](https://energynews.us) to read new reporting by Kathiann and our larger team of reporters covering energy news across the region.

# WHAT'S NEXT FOR CLEAN TRANSPORTATION?



When Minnesota officially became a clean cars state earlier this year, 13 years of work by Fresh Energy came to fruition. By adopting these stricter-than-federal tailpipe emissions standards, Minnesota has taken a significant step toward meeting our greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals while improving air quality and laying the foundation for more electric vehicle (EV) adoption. But we are not stopping there!

In tandem with our high-profile clean cars work, Fresh Energy's policy experts have been pursuing myriad other policy-based solutions for advancing clean transportation of all kinds in the state. So what's next for clean transportation? Here are some of our key goals for the next few years:

**Pave the way to electrify transit and school buses.** From school kids to seniors, Minnesotans of all ages deserve access to clean, carbon-free public transportation. Fresh Energy is working at the agency and regional levels to ensure progress to spur equitable electric transit is underway across the state.

**Map a path to zero emissions for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles.** Innovators right here in Minnesota—like Zeus Electric Chassis in White Bear Lake and Rosenbauer America in the city of Wyoming—are reshaping public understanding of how trucks, buses, and service vehicles can help clean up our transportation system. Fresh Energy is committed to helping Minnesota tackle emissions from all modes of transportation, and getting a handle on emissions from these types of vehicles is an important step.

**Ensure equitable access to EV charging and electricity rates.** With the passage of Clean Cars Minnesota, more EVs will be on Minnesota roads, and it is imperative that EV charging rates and infrastructure policies are designed and implemented with equity front and center. Fresh Energy will be working at the Public Utilities Commission and beyond to file technical comments and push for equitable electric transportation deployment throughout the state.

There's no quick fix for electrifying our transportation system. Fresh Energy is committed to pursuing a broad range of policies that will contribute to decarbonizing the rest of the transportation sector and transform the way we move our people and our goods so that our health and climate are protected and our communities thrive.

DONOR PROFILE | FLORENCE HEDEEN



## COMMUNITY DRIVEN

Florence Hede has spent her life volunteering and giving back in her community of Park Rapids, Minnesota. With the headwaters of the Mississippi in its backyard, her town has a reputation as a great place to experience the best of Minnesota outdoors. But over the last decade, Florence has seen firsthand a pressing new challenge arise in her region: climate change.

Since the 1970s, Florence and her husband Carter have prioritized maintaining and preserving their property, which now totals 200 acres. But their property is very different than it was 50 years ago.

"Due to climate change, pine trees will not survive here anymore and that's a big change. For us it was a strong wake-up call. This is having a tangible effect on where we live."

In addition to shifting how her family consumes energy, Florence is an active community member who always shows up to the town hall meetings and makes her legislators aware of steps she hopes they will take in our transition to clean energy.

Florence and her family support Fresh Energy because they know that action now will shape the Minnesota we leave to future generations. Join Florence and her family by making a Power Circle contribution of \$1,000 or more today. Please contact Meggie LaValley at [lavalley@fresh-energy.org](mailto:lavalley@fresh-energy.org).



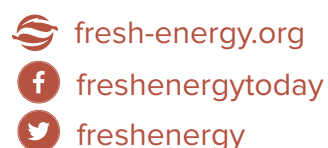


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LOOKING FORWARD | CLEAN ENERGY IN 2022

## MEET YOUR CLEAN ENERGY ADVOCACY DREAM TEAM

The 2022 session of the Minnesota Legislature is right around the corner and we are ready for it.

Led by Justin Fay, Fresh Energy's public affairs team and a deep bench of policy staff—some of whom are pictured below—are gearing up to elevate and promote equitable, actionable, and bipartisan clean energy legislation that's good for all Minnesotans and our state's climate goals.

While we await the outcomes of federal climate action debates in Washington, D.C., as well as international action at COP26 in Glasgow, Fresh Energy supporters can count on our staff to provide the Minnesota Legislature, state agencies, and local governments expert testimony and one-on-one conversations on all things clean energy and climate.

Visit [fresh-energy.org](https://fresh-energy.org) for updates and ways to take action.