

# ENERGYMATTERS



## ALL ABOARD! ACCELERATING ELECTRIC BUSES IN MINNESOTA

Electric vehicles (EVs) have been dominating the spotlight—especially since Minnesota broke new ground for cold-weather states in 2021 by adopting clean car standards. But it is time for single-occupant EVs to get in the passenger seat and let the next big thing—electric buses—take the wheel.

### Incoming investments in public transportation

With over \$800 million in funding for public transportation heading to Minnesota from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law—not to mention an additional \$2.5 billion in competitive grants for electric transit buses—the time is now for cities and counties to establish electric bus goals and policies that will ensure they get a piece of the pie.

So far, Minnesota's largest transit agency, Metro Transit, is leading the way with its newly released Zero-Emission Bus Transition Plan that lays out its bus fleet electrification plans for the next five years. But others are getting on board too. More than 47 school districts in Minnesota applied for Minnesota Pollution Control Agency grants for electric school buses, and pilots are already underway in the Osseo, Lakeville, and Eastern Carver County school districts.

### Tapping more federal funds

While the influx of federal funding is exciting, it is not all cherry pie—or at least not yet. In many cases, matching funds will be needed to unlock the full potential of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Fortunately, here in Minnesota we have the opportunity to reduce that barrier by allocating a fraction of Minnesota's \$9.3 billion surplus to match these federal grants and invest even more in our shared clean energy future.

**This is where you come in! We need Minnesotans to act and tell their legislators that this is an investment that would have significant, long-term statewide returns.**

Minnesota's local and regional leaders have a key role to play too, by planning for electric transportation and making sure it is included in local climate and transportation plans.

### Take Action for Electric Buses and Infrastructure!

Tell your legislators to set aside money from Minnesota's budget surplus to ensure we can take full advantage of federal grant dollars in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Visit [fresh-energy.org/take-action](https://fresh-energy.org/take-action) to speak up!



You may know that this year, Fresh Energy is celebrating three impactful decades of policy and advocacy work for clean energy and climate in Minnesota and across the Midwest.

When the photo above was taken 20 years ago, the fight against coal had just begun. Today, the Allen S. King coal plant pictured has a closure date and is running less often.

**I keep telling people that the biggest way we're celebrating Fresh Energy's history is by continuing to make history.**

One of the ways we're doing this is by stepping up to take on the deeply entrenched gas system in Minnesota. Energy experts, thought leaders, and advocates around the country are watching to see how Minnesota will set the pace for greater decarbonization in cold-weather states.

Another way we're making history is by releasing a groundbreaking analysis of the equity and health impacts of coal and gas plants on the communities in which they're located.

We will be debuting some of the results of this study in our public comments on the upcoming Minnesota Power Integrated Resource Plan. Stay tuned for a blog and webinar diving deep into the data in the coming months.

Thank you for your support and please encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to get involved with Fresh Energy!

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TWITTER: @nobleideas

**SPRING 2022 / ENERGY MATTERS**

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AT [FRESH-ENERGY.ORG](https://fresh-energy.org)

## CENTERPOINT ENERGY'S RATE CASE AND THE FUTURE OF GAS



A goal of Fresh Energy's new Gas Decarbonization team is to identify and engage in opportunities to more closely scrutinize the gas system in Minnesota. In addition to engaging in a variety of new gas-related dockets at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, Fresh Energy has also intervened on the current

CenterPoint Energy rate case by filing expert testimony on some outdated and untested policies that are contributing to higher gas bills and climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions.

In an effort to make proceedings at the Commission more public-friendly, Fresh Energy has also created an easy tool that CenterPoint customers can use to have their voices heard on the case. Learn more about our testimony on the rate case and how you can take action at [fresh-energy.org/centerpoint-rate-case-2022](https://fresh-energy.org/centerpoint-rate-case-2022).

## STREAMLINING INTERCONNECTION



Bottlenecks connecting new solar to the grid have hampered some solar development in Minnesota, but thanks to advocacy by Fresh Energy and partners, this will be changing later this year. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will soon issue a formal order on Xcel Energy's interconnection process that will put the utility back on track to meet customer needs.

## PANEL UPGRADE BILL LIGHTS UP LEGISLATURE

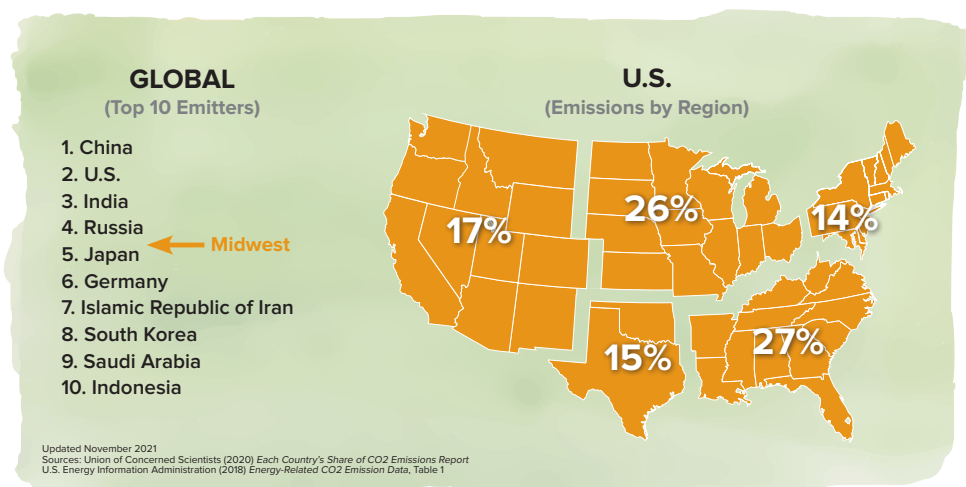


Upgrading a home or apartment's electric panel is an expensive undertaking. This cost is a significant barrier for Minnesotans who want to switch their gas appliances—like stoves, water heaters, and dryers—to electric. However, this switch is crucial as we work to end our dependence on climate- and health-harming fossil gas.

To help tackle this growing problem, Fresh Energy's policy experts have been working at the Minnesota Legislature to write and advance a first-of-its-kind bill (HF3897) that creates an assistance program for property owners who want to upgrade and future-proof their electric panel. This is one of many exciting bills the Fresh Energy team is working on this legislative session. Learn about more of our legislative priorities on our blog at [fresh-energy.org/2022-legislative-outlook-minnesota](https://fresh-energy.org/2022-legislative-outlook-minnesota).



# WHY THE NORTH AND MIDWEST MATTER MOST



Global climate change can feel overwhelming, but there is a lot we can and must do here in Minnesota and the Midwest to put us on the path to a healthy future.

If the Midwest was its own country, it would be the fifth largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world. Fresh Energy is using policy change to tackle the root causes of our high emissions. We're working to:

- **Get all of the coal and gas out of our electric supply.** Wind, solar, and battery storage are highly affordable and reliable, and Minnesota is shifting to a zero-carbon electric grid. Fresh Energy is driving policy change to make it happen faster.
- **Move our fossil fuel-dependent transportation system onto clean electric-powered cars, trucks, buses, and other mobility options.** Fresh Energy is making exciting progress in this area, helping Minnesota become the first "clean cars" state in the Midwest and moving ahead on electric buses and trucks.
- **End reliance on fossil gas for heating homes and powering industry.** Combusting fossil fuels in our homes and communities unleashes powerful greenhouse gases and pollutants that harm our health. There are new technologies that will allow for clean electric heating, even in our cold climate. Fresh Energy is charting the policy pathway to make the transition.

The East and West coasts are moving faster on climate, but the U.S. can't move forward without the Midwest. That's why Fresh Energy's work, and your support, are so important.

**Thank you to the inaugural members of our Fresh Future League who have included Fresh Energy in their estate plans!**



Anonymous (3)  
Michael and Janet Brown  
William Dow  
John and Susan Dunlop  
Marc Hugunin and Alice Pepin  
Amy S. Lange

Dick and Joyce McFarland  
Michael Menzel and Kathryn Iverson  
Stacy Miller  
Gary and Claire Nelson  
Michael and Patsy Noble

DONOR PROFILE | MARC AND ALICE



## LEGACY IN ACTION

As residents of the St. Croix River Valley, Marc Hugunin and Alice Pepin have long supported protecting one of Minnesota's greatest resources: fresh water. In 2008, Xcel Energy proposed a landfill site in nearby West Lakeland Township to dispose of fly ash from the Allen S. King Power Plant in Oak Park Heights. Concerned the site was unsuitable and could contaminate the groundwater, Marc worked with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to advocate for a rule that would prohibit landfills where karst (a soluble topography) was likely to occur. It worked; plans for the landfill were scrapped.

Years later, as Marc and Alice developed their estate plans, protecting water remained a priority for them. But they also realized that a stable climate plays an essential role in safeguarding Minnesota's natural resources. Attracted to Fresh Energy's focus on shaping and driving energy policies to advance climate solutions, Marc and Alice joined the Fresh Future League in 2018 with a planned gift commitment to Fresh Energy.

Alice passed away in 2021 after battling cancer, but the decision that she and Marc made to invest in Fresh Energy will ensure that their support of clean water and a stable climate endures for generations to come.

To join Marc and Alice in leaving a clean, sustainable legacy with a planned gift, please contact Fresh Energy's Development Team at [freshfuture@fresh-energy.org](mailto:freshfuture@fresh-energy.org).



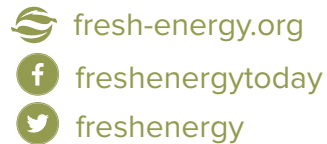
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Together, we're driving bold policy  
solutions for a just, carbon-free future.

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#### UPCOMING EVENT | SUMMER WEBINAR SERIES



## Thursdays in July: Summer webinar series from Fresh Energy

Energy and climate issues play out across our society—in books and film, institutions of higher learning, our democracy, and in the very air we breathe.

Join Fresh Energy and special guests for a webinar series with fun and engaging discussion about the many facets of energy in our lives.

Visit [fresh-energy.org/energy-plus](https://fresh-energy.org/energy-plus) for emerging details on the series and to register.

**Energy + the Arts:** From science fiction to popular Hollywood films, energy and climate are part of the arts today. How accurate are these depictions, and can they spur action?

**Energy + Higher Ed:** Minnesota colleges are modeling net-zero innovation—and teaching the next generation of leaders. What's next on the horizon for these important institutions?

**Energy + Democracy:** Voting rights is one of the most pressing issues of our time. How does voter engagement intersect with action on climate and justice?

**Energy + Health:** Tailpipe emissions, natural gas in our homes, and other reliance on fossil fuels impacts air quality across the state. How can we incorporate health impacts of energy decisions?