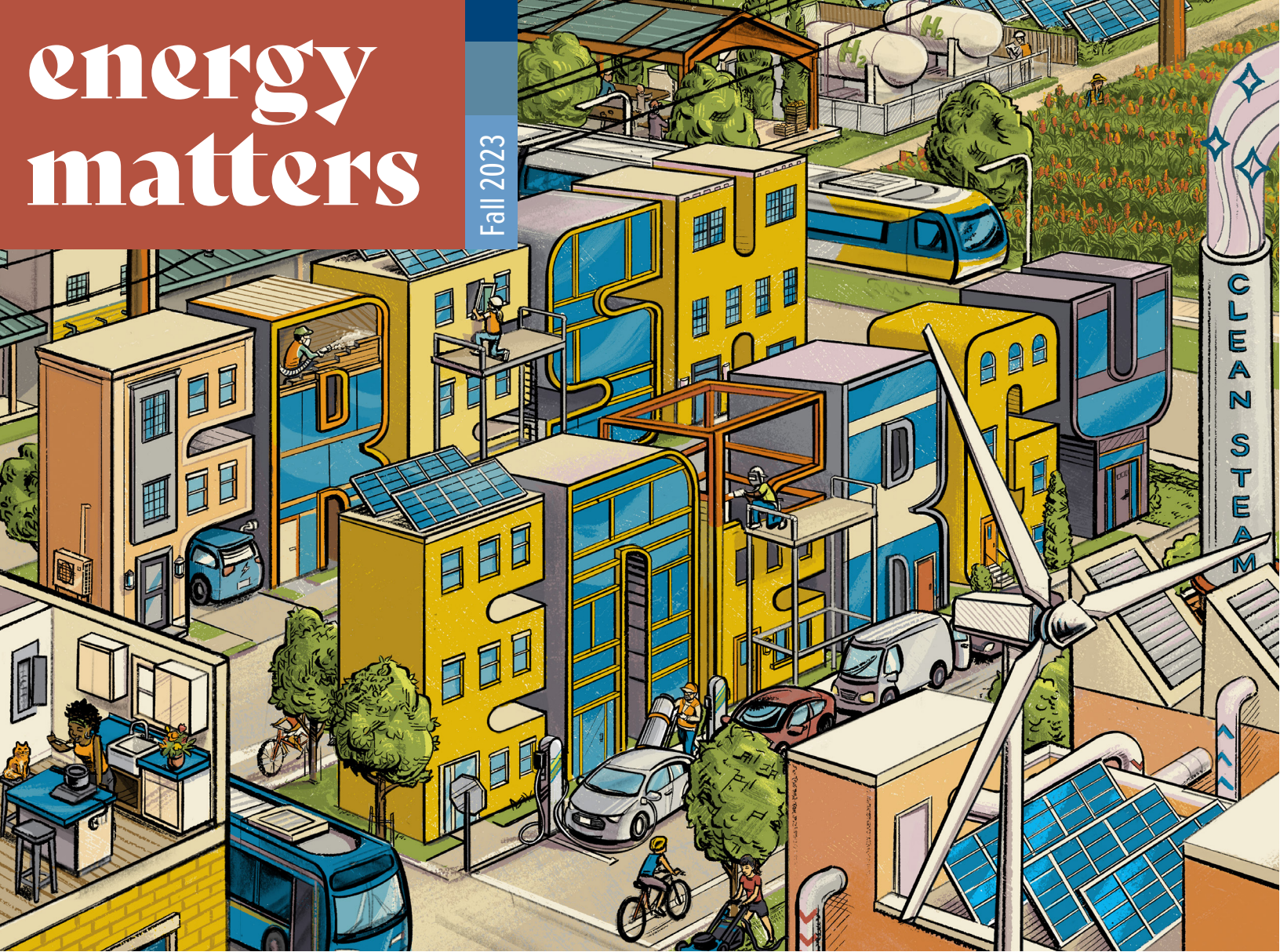


energy matters

Fall 2023



We're living the energy transition!

What does the transition to clean energy really look like? We hear this question a lot. And inevitably we're tempted to go right into the weeds and start using tongue twisters like, "industrial decarbonization" and "updated model energy code"—yikes! While these things and more are absolutely critical to moving off of fossil fuels and onto carbon-free energy like wind and solar, **a beautiful thing about the energy transition is that it's already underway and comes in many forms.**

Maybe your neighbor got a heat pump water heater. Or perhaps your child's day care maintains its lawn with an electric mower. And what about your coworker who loves their e-bike? These simple, small things happening every day are the lifeblood of the energy transition.

If you attended our Benefit Breakfast in October, the illustration at the top of this page might look familiar. It came into being because we wanted to tell less and show more. Upon closer inspection, you'll find lots of little surprises—from an induction cooktop to heat pumps to public electric vehicle chargers.

We've turned this art into a website that provides some high-level details about state and federal tax credits and rebates that are available thanks in part to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Check it out by scanning the QR code on this page or visiting electrificationandyou.org.

These historic federal and state investments are amping up the energy transition, and it's more important than ever that we and the communities we live in understand first-hand what this change can look like and how federal assistance can be accessed. It's only then that we can help grow even broader public resolve for transitioning the harder parts of our economy, like our industry and agriculture sectors, to clean energy.

Fresh Energy is deeply committed to keeping Minnesota and our region on the path to a carbon-free future by advancing local-level and industry-wide policy. But we're also passionate about the change that can happen—and is happening—in our communities. Thank you for being part of this work!



Director's letter



My first Benefit Breakfast is in the books! And wow, what an amazing event. My expectations were blown out of the water by the 550 friends and supporters of Fresh Energy who gathered with us in October—I hope you were able to join us!

Our guest speaker Ramez Naam said, “I am honored to be here with an organization that is working to accelerate this transition, and I think the most important thing we can do is continue to take action.”

Ramez's words resonated with me because he's spot on. Fresh Energy staff are working to speed the transition to clean energy in Minnesota and the Midwest, but they're also striving to bring more people into the conversation and give them opportunities for action.

Back in my teaching days, we used to say, “It's great to be inspired, but even better to have something tangible you can learn from.” This is one of the things that I appreciate most at Fresh Energy.

Taking on the climate crisis is inspiring, but doing it with ambitious and actionable clean energy policy that advances equitable outcomes is extremely tangible. With this work, we are making real change that can give our kids a better, healthier planet.

Thank you for your support. We couldn't do this important work without you!

Brenda Cassellius
Brenda Cassellius
Executive Director

Meet our state's hottest new coalition



Fresh Energy is excited to share the launch of the Clean Heat Minnesota coalition that will educate and activate Minnesotans who want clean, affordable energy to power heating, cooking, and appliances.

Fresh Energy cofounded this new, multiracial coalition alongside COPAL, a nonprofit dedicated to improving the quality of life of the Latino community in Minnesota, and the Citizens Utility Board of Minnesota, an advocacy nonprofit for utility consumers. We will be sharing frequent updates about the coalition's important work. In the meantime, take a look at the

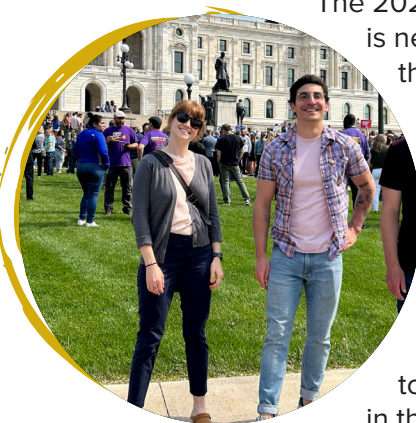
website at CleanHeatMN.org and sign up to receive updates directly from the coalition!

Cleaning up Minnesota's electricity



This fall, Fresh Energy engaged in Otter Tail Power's resource plan at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, which lays out the utility's long-range plans for electricity generation and investments for the next 15 years. We are pushing hard to add more renewable generation and battery storage while transitioning Otter Tail's system away from a coal-dominated generation fleet by 2030, including a 2028 exit from Coyote Station. Switching from coal to wind, solar, and storage would save customers more than \$800 million over the next 15 years and significantly reduce carbon emissions, an important step to meet Minnesota's climate goals.

Session outlook: Ambition and equity



The 2024 session of the Minnesota Legislature is nearly upon us! Last year's session was the most productive climate action session in state history, highlighted by the 100% clean electricity bill (now law) putting Minnesota back on the map as a national leader on clean energy. This year, Fresh Energy will continue to build on this unprecedented momentum as we look to advance economy-wide solutions to the climate crisis. This means leaning in to find thoughtful, impactful policy solutions in the hardest sectors to decarbonize—like industry and agriculture. Fresh Energy's Public

Affairs team and policy staff will be advocating for equitable, ambitious, and actionable clean energy legislation that meets the urgency of the moment and benefits all who live here.

Learn more about these stories at fresh-energy.org.

Empowering the energy transition



As Fresh Energy builds a cleaner future, a critical player in this transition often goes unnoticed: the electrical distribution system. Often called the “poles and wires” that weave through our neighborhoods, this local electricity network plays a pivotal role in delivering electricity from substations to homes and businesses.

At Fresh Energy, we advocate for a future-proof electric grid, emphasizing the need to upgrade the distribution system to align with the evolving energy landscape. As we shift toward electric vehicles, heat pumps, and decentralized energy sources like rooftop solar, the distribution system must evolve to meet our changing needs.

The electrical distribution system has several key components: substations, distribution lines, transformers, distributed generation, and battery storage. Substations transform high-voltage electricity to a safer, lower voltage. Distribution lines carry this electricity to nearby buildings, where transformers further reduce the voltage before it enters buildings. Distributed generation, like rooftop solar, and battery storage add a modern twist to the grid, enhancing resiliency and reliability.

Fresh Energy advocates for upgrading the distribution system for a decarbonized future. We engage at the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, where we participate in Integrated Distribution Plans (IDPs). These plans, filed by electric utilities every two years, outline strategies to upgrade the distribution grid. **Fresh Energy encourages utilities to accelerate the energy transition while ensuring equity and justice.**

We also take part in utility rate cases, advocating for policies that promote access to clean energy. Our involvement in Xcel Energy’s hosting capacity process evaluates the grid’s ability to accommodate new solar energy. By closely tracking the interconnection process, we ensure a smooth transition for projects like rooftop solar.

Looking ahead, Fresh Energy is committed to collaborating with stakeholders to advance proactive electric distribution system planning. Our focus on the 2023 IDPs promises continued efforts to integrate more clean electricity, leverage carbon-free power sources, and optimize smart grid technologies for enhanced efficiency and reliability.

As we navigate the complexities of our evolving energy landscape, Fresh Energy will stand at the forefront to shape a distribution system capable of powering our decarbonized lives and facilitating a seamless transition to a cleaner future.

Donor profile



Hyacinth Diehl, Felicia DeSmith, and Rebecca Murray have been concerned about our future in a warming world and began searching for organizations creating meaningful climate policy. Their financial advisor Ted Contag (who serves on Fresh Energy’s Board) suggested they check out Fresh Energy.

Hyacinth, a member of the founding team at a cybersecurity company, notes that with any complex problem, there are a range of solutions: some will be effective, some will be affordable, and some will hopefully be both. The important thing, however, is to be laser-focused on effective solutions, not just solutions that sound good.

“It’s such a big job to save the world, and there are a lot of distractions, especially on the climate front,” says Felicia. “Playing the short game while also playing the long game is sophisticated. It gets me excited to support an organization that’s doing that.

“If the core place you want to put your effort in is climate policy, the people to put your money in is Fresh Energy. It’s that simple,” says Hyacinth.

Hyacinth, Felicia, and Rebecca know that effective climate policy is the key to shaping an equitable, decarbonized future in Minnesota. Join them by making a Power Circle contribution of \$1,000 or more to Fresh Energy today.

Please contact Meggie LaValley at lavalley@fresh-energy.org.



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New look!

We've refreshed the look of the Energy Matters newsletter that you know and love—but don't worry! It still contains the same great updates on energy and climate policy you've come to expect from Fresh Energy. Thanks for reading!



2024: New year, new goals

One New Year's resolution is good, but three are better! Ring in the new year with this trifecta of clean energy resolutions.

1. Get the scoop

Read up on the exciting tax credits and rebates that can help you kick carbon at [electrificationandyou.org](https://www.electrificationandyou.org) and then make a plan! It's smart to begin with a home energy audit to get the lay of the land. If you are renting your home, use this resource to start a conversation with your building owner about energy efficiency and electrification!

3. Make a giving plan

When you support Fresh Energy, you are shaping and driving meaningful energy and climate policy in Minnesota and the Midwest to move the needle on climate change. Did you know that you can donate a gift of stock or a portion of your required minimum distribution from your IRA? Visit [fresh-energy.org/waystogive](https://www.fresh-energy.org/waystogive) to learn more and make a donation today!

2. Take action

Fresh Energy is here to help you—and all Minnesotans!—be heard by policy leaders and elected officials. Keep an eye on current Fresh Energy Action Alerts and sign up to be a member of our Action Network at [fresh-energy.org/take-action](https://www.fresh-energy.org/take-action).

