



## A slam dunk for Crookston

Exciting things are on the horizon in Crookston, Minnesota, and it's not just the sight of a survey crew mapping the future home of a renewable energy project outside town.

**There's a transformative new initiative in town that Fresh Energy is proud to be a part of: Empower Crookston, a group working together to improve quality of life, boost the local economy, and make energy more affordable for residents.**

Empower Crookston is made up of local organizations and community leaders collaborating to secure state and federal funding for things like energy efficiency upgrades and clean energy projects. These projects invest in the city's workforce, businesses, and infrastructure, and are a testament to how the energy transition can revitalize communities across Minnesota.

Empower Crookston members meet weekly to discuss funding opportunities, grant applications, and the status of its proposed projects. Coffee burbles into cups, neighbors walk table to table to catch up with each other, and week by week, Crookston is crystallizing its clean energy future.

Fresh Energy joined the University of Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball team this fall for a door-knocking effort (pictured above). Over several evenings, 21 members of the team and three coaches distributed over 500 flyers about energy efficiency rebates and tax incentives. Athletes helped residents complete a quality-of-life survey and build support for more clean energy work in the community.

But Empower Crookston isn't just about upgrading the city's homes to be clean and energy efficient; a number of clean technology projects are also in the works. A 4.8-megawatt hybrid renewable energy system is conducting site assessments outside of town. If built, the wind, solar, and battery storage system would power essential services like the Fire Department, EMS, City Hall, and the local hospital with reliable, clean power.

In addition, the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) is exploring a closed-loop geothermal system to heat and cool the campus of 1,500 students. By drawing on the steady warmth of the earth's crust, this geothermal system would let UMC harness natural heat to warm campus buildings in winter and send excess warmth back into the ground during summer — all powered by increasingly-clean electricity instead of fossil fuels.

**Empower Crookston is more than a collection of community energy projects. It's a vision for how Minnesota's cities are leading the energy transition by building stronger, cleaner communities.** Week by week, Crookston is growing to be a shining example of what Minnesotans are capable of when we collaborate on mutually beneficial, innovative projects.

Scan the QR or visit [fresh-energy.org/decarbonize](https://fresh-energy.org/decarbonize) to listen to a recent episode of "City Climate Corner" and get the scoop from Fresh Energy's John Vaughn and other members of the Empower Crookston team.





## Letter from leadership



"It's ok if you're not hopeful as long as you're useful." I've been thinking a lot about these words from Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, the powerful guest speaker at our Benefit Breakfast.

After the election, I know many of us in the climate advocacy space are ready to pull up our bootstraps and dig in even more to ensure the progress we have made continues. Believe me when I say that nothing will change Fresh Energy's unwavering advocacy to decarbonize our economy and fight against climate change.

The most important thing is that you are here with us, and we are committed to taking on the climate crisis together in Minnesota. And truly there's never been a time when we've needed your partnership and support more.

You can read more about our commitment to thoughtful courage and unrelenting optimism at [fresh-energy.org/thoughtful-courage](https://fresh-energy.org/thoughtful-courage).

We are grounded by our Board-approved "Vision 2030: Fresh Energy's Strategic Framework," which sets the direction for our organization for the next five years. You'll read more about it on the next page and I hope you will take a few minutes to watch the short video.

Thank you for your support. We truly can not do this important work without you.

*Brenda Cassellius*

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Chief Executive Officer

## Cleaner skies with sustainable aviation fuel



Greenhouse gas emissions from air travel have been notoriously difficult to decarbonize, yet sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) offers a lower-carbon alternative to traditional, polluting jet fuel. Made from renewable resources like Minnesota-grown oilseeds or clean electricity, SAF can significantly cut down on the aviation industry's emissions while supporting Minnesota agriculture and innovation. Fresh Energy is working to ensure that a SAF marketplace in Minnesota is truly sustainable so that our state will continue to lead the Midwest in climate solutions while decarbonizing air travel, growing our clean economy, and building a cleaner, stronger future that benefits all. Get the scoop at [bit.ly/SAF-101](https://bit.ly/SAF-101).

## A win for energy equity in Minnesota



The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission recently approved a first-of-its-kind pilot program from Xcel Energy that will provide automatic energy assistance to high-energy-burdened Minnesotans. This innovative program will help an estimated 22,000 households in 71 communities, ensuring that those struggling with high energy bills will receive an automatic bill credit to cut costs without requiring a time-consuming application process.

Fresh Energy and more than 20 other community-based groups signed on in support of the program, which ensures our energy will be more affordable and accessible to all, helping to create a more just energy future.

## Session outlook: Leadership during change



The 2025 session of the Minnesota Legislature is fast approaching. It is "all hands on deck" for our policy team as we closely analyze the implications of election outcomes on our session priorities and review emerging opportunities to ensure we are advancing ambitious and equitable clean energy legislation.

During the last session, Fresh Energy staff were called upon 40 times to provide expert testimony. We value the trust our elected leaders put into our thought leadership and anticipate this year will be similar.

Stay tuned to our website and social media for webinar invites, action alerts, and more. And if you aren't already a member of the Action Network, sign up by scanning the QR or visiting [fresh-energy.org/action-network](https://fresh-energy.org/action-network). Then stay tuned! Word is that the Action Network "Lagers and Legislation" party will be back this winter by popular demand.

**Learn more about these stories at [fresh-energy.org](https://fresh-energy.org).**



# Fresh Energy's VISION 2030

## Introducing "Vision 2030: Fresh Energy's Strategic Framework"

When it comes to fighting the climate crisis, the changes we make by 2030 — both in our policies and our actions — will have monumental impact. For more than three decades, Fresh Energy has been leading the way on energy and climate solutions. What we do here in Minnesota has the power to move the Midwest, the country, and the world toward a clean energy future.

**But what does Minnesota's path to a carbon-free future look like? The answer is our "Vision 2030: Fresh Energy's Strategic Framework," which solidifies our climate ambition and dedication to equity while also creating a roadmap for driving down emissions.**

However, if we are to achieve a carbon-neutral economy by mid-century, we must address *all* sectors of our economy. "Vision 2030" charts a course for Fresh Energy to double down on our clean electricity, transportation, and buildings work and also turn our solutions-focused expertise to decarbonizing heavy industry and agriculture — all using three proven strategies.

### Sectors



Electricity

Buildings

Transportation

Agriculture

Heavy Industry

### Strategies



Policy Solutions

Implementation

Communications

The need for action is more urgent than ever — and the solutions are increasingly complex and difficult. **But at Fresh Energy, we are driven by hope for the future and ambitious policy.**

Thank you to Fresh Energy's Board of Directors and staff who collaborated to create "Vision 2030." Visit [fresh-energy.org/Vision2030](https://fresh-energy.org/Vision2030) or scan the QR to the right to learn more about the process, read our updated "Core Values and Guiding Principles," and view the video we used to debut the plan at our October Benefit Breakfast. Join us in making our Vision 2030 a reality.



## Donor profile



Sara and Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, members of the Community of St. Martin in Minneapolis, are addressing climate change by participating in a voluntary "gas tax" program. Since the true cost of gasoline doesn't account for its environmental impact, they add \$1-2 per gallon to their fuel expenses and donate these funds to organizations like Fresh Energy.

"We realized the environmental and health impacts of gasoline weren't being reflected in its price," said Sara. "Our 'gas tax' helps us stay conscious of our energy usage before switching to an EV while supporting organizations like Fresh Energy."

Sara, Jack, and the Community of St. Martin are impressed by Fresh Energy's effectiveness in advancing public policies to decarbonize Minnesota. "This initiative not only makes us more aware of our choices, but it also allows us to meaningfully contribute to building a carbon-free future," said Jack.

For Sara and Jack, supporting Fresh Energy is about making a tangible impact. "There's a lot we can do individually, but when we join together, we can create much bigger change," said Jack.

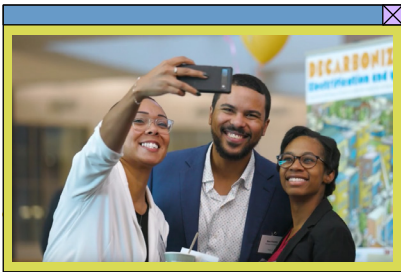
Join Sara, Jack, and the Community of St. Martin by making a Power Circle contribution of \$1,000 or more today.

Please contact Meggie LaValley at [lavalley@fresh-energy.org](mailto:lavalley@fresh-energy.org).



## Lights, camera, action.

Check out the highlight reel of our Benefit Breakfast at [bit.ly/Fresh-Breakfast](https://bit.ly/Fresh-Breakfast).



## Fresh Reads

### Kickstart your winter reading with this book

Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson was Fresh Energy's featured speaker at our annual Benefit Breakfast this October. **Her new book "What If We Get It Right? Visions of Climate Futures" dares us to imagine an equitable, thriving climate future.**

With an optimistic and pragmatic approach, Johnson shares that the solutions we need are already here. As Fresh Energy rolls up our sleeves to advance climate action, her timely book is an inspiring guide to what's possible if we get it right.

Ayana's book features writing from Jigar Shah and Rhiana Gunn-Wright, both keynote speakers at past Fresh Energy Benefit Breakfasts, as well as Bill

McKibben, Wendell Berry, Xiye Bastida, and Kate Marvel, covering diverse topics from tax policy to regenerative agriculture, heat pumps and hurricanes, climate justice and protests, and — our favorite — creating ambitious public policy to not only mitigate climate change, but build a more equitable, thriving society in the process.

Now, more than ever, Fresh Energy remains steadfast in imagining what makes truly ambitious, equitable climate policy.

**Did you miss Ayana's conversation with Fresh Energy's Dr. Margaret Cherne-Hendrick at the Benefit Breakfast?** Find it at [bit.ly/Breakfast-24](https://bit.ly/Breakfast-24) or scan the QR code to listen on our podcast.



Guests at the Benefit Breakfast scored signed copies of the book from Ayana herself.

