

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
**CLEAN ENERGY IS
AFFORDABLE ENERGY**

We are coming out of a difficult winter in Minnesota. In addition to the attacks on our immigrant communities, the fear and violence, it was also bitterly cold. With rising energy prices, many Minnesotans struggled to heat their homes. Across the state, folks had to make tough choices in order to pay their heating bills.



Paul Austin
Executive Director

These days, it's easy to feel like we're surrounded by intractable problems. Some issues could take years or even generations to resolve. And we can't control everything—but we can move the needle in some important places. Especially when we work together. One problem we already have the answer to is how to achieve clean, affordable energy for every Minnesotan.

We know renewable energy sources are not just cleaner but cheaper because our neighbors are seeing it reflected in their energy bills. The states in our region that are using the most wind and solar are the ones with the lowest electricity rates.

Minnesota is on our way there as well. Today, more than half of our electricity comes from clean sources. And thanks to the 100% Carbon Free Electricity by 2040 law we passed in 2023, that number is climbing. We'll need to keep protecting that law from efforts to weaken it with loopholes and workarounds, but if we've learned anything from the last few months, it's that there is incredible strength in Minnesotans' community-mindedness and stubborn tenacity to pursue what's right. Together, I'm confident we'll achieve what we promised each other in 2023.

Sunnier days are ahead of us—I truly believe it.

The work of Conservation Minnesota is guided by your values and priorities. We listen to Minnesotans and focus on solving the conservation problems that matter most to you.

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**CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA**

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CLEAN, AFFORDABLE ENERGY FOR ALL MINNESOTANS



A smart investment for Minnesota families

Minnesota has a strong track record of investing in energy efficiency and clean energy solutions that save families money.

- **Energy efficiency programs** like the Conservation Improvement Program help homes and businesses use less energy, lowering bills and reducing the need for expensive new power plants. Over the past several decades, these programs have saved Minnesotans billions in energy costs.
- Wind and solar are now the **cheapest new sources of electricity** in the region, outcompeting older polluting sources like coal and gas plants.
- Minnesota's clean energy leadership means we rely less on out-of-state energy imports and more on clean power produced right here at home by Minnesota workers.

At a national level, energy prices are rising twice as fast as inflation, and increased demand means we need to keep building more clean energy. But just as demand is increasing, the federal government is stalling or canceling clean energy projects altogether while costing customers millions to prop up failing, highly polluting coal projects in our region.



But Minnesota knows better. Costs for solar are down 75% from a decade ago—and we'll never run out of sunlight. And while energy-intensive data center proposals were popping up across the state last year, Minnesota passed legislation prohibiting utilities from passing along the cost for their energy demand to the public.



Learning from our neighbors

Minnesota isn't alone in this transition. The Midwest is showing what's possible when clean energy becomes the path forward.

Our neighbors to the south and west, **Iowa and South Dakota**, have some of the lowest energy rates in the region and are great examples of how states benefit when wind and solar are embraced.

- In **Iowa**, approximately two-thirds of the state's electricity comes from renewables, almost all of that from wind, giving Iowa the largest wind power share in the country. In 2022, a particularly breezy year, Iowa's largest utility produced more wind energy than its total customer electricity demand, which helped lower costs.
- **South Dakota** is currently the top state in the country for clean energy, with renewable resources generating more than 80% of its electricity, and nearly 60% coming from wind power.

These neighbors show that investing in renewables isn't a hypothetical solution for some time in the future—it's an economic reality already improving lives across the region today.



What's next


Minnesota's 100% Clean Energy Standard, passed in 2023, commits our state to carbon-free electricity by 2040. This ambitious plan isn't just about tackling climate change—it's about building a resilient, affordable energy system that works for everyone. One that's better for the health of all Minnesotans and creates real jobs in our economy.

But progress doesn't happen on its own—and it doesn't come without dedicated and sustained action. We've already fought off threats designed to weaken the 100% Clean Energy Standard, and we know there will be more. In the coming legislative sessions, we'll work together to protect and strengthen this law and other policies that:

- Keep energy affordable and with fair prices across every community.
- Support local clean energy jobs and investment.
- Empower every Minnesotan to benefit from the transition to clean power.



Minnesota's energy future is bright

Together, we can make Minnesota the nation's leader in clean, healthy, affordable energy. As a member-supported nonprofit, we rely on your gifts to power this work. 

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