

Minnesota State Senate



**Senator Jennifer A.
McEwen**
Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

August 29, 2022

Dear Public Utilities Commission:

Over the course of my lifetime, scientists have been warning us that we need to act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, meaningful action to match the seriousness of the crisis has not been taken. Now, having lived in denial and having not taken responsibility for decades, we have arrived at this moment of crisis, and we will need to make up for lost time. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear that our current goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 will be too late to avoid catastrophic climate change. We have a critical opportunity to invest in our collective future before us. I urge the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission in the strongest terms to approve the Clean Energy Organizations' preferred energy resource plan.

This must include building more renewable energy infrastructure. We know that the current and future energy needs of our region can be reliably met by solar and wind energy with battery storage at a similar up-front cost as new fossil fuel power plants, but without the public health and climate harms or financial risk. It is essential to our community's cardio-vascular health and financial security that the Hibbard plant in West Duluth be closed within the year. Additionally, we must retire the Boswell 3 coal unit by 2030, and create a plan to retire Boswell 4 early. It is clear that new investments in fossil fuel infrastructure do not make financial sense with the volatility of the fossil fuel market and the necessary short-term transition to a clean energy economy, and they will only exacerbate the problems we face. It is with that in mind that I urge you to join our community in rejecting the NTEC fossil gas plant.

This work presents a variety of opportunities to build a better future for our communities in Duluth, our region, and across Minnesota. We have the opportunity to partner labor unions, community leaders, and Minnesota Power to develop worker transition plans, advocate for state and federal support for energy securitization, and support our communities by expanding access to energy efficiency resources, low-income solar programs, and rooftop and community solar projects. With community in mind, we must also prioritize equitable access to benefits of clean energy and insist that the PUC conduct health impact studies as a routine practice in the fulfillment of its duty to protect the public interest within utilities' IRP processes to ensure that harms to public health and wellbeing, which historically have disproportionately impacted BIPOC and low-income communities, are not perpetuated going forward.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer A. McEwen".

Jennifer A. McEwen
State Senator
District 7, Duluth