



March 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

As members of the Minnesota state legislature we represent districts that encompass Duluth, Hoyt Lakes and Sylvan Township. All three districts are included in projects as part Minnesota Power's proposal in MPUC Docket No. E015/M-20-828: Petition of Minnesota Power for the Approval of the Acquisition of Solar Power to Support Economic Relief and Recovery.

We understand Minnesota Power is seeking approval of these solar projects as part of the request by the Commission to support economic recovery and relief efforts in the wake of the economic hardships experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognize the merit of the proposal being brought forward by Minnesota Power and are supportive of it moving forward in a timely manner if deemed in the public interest by the Commission.

Vital to these projects are benefits provided to the local economy, support for local jobs and prevailing wage, changes in the procurement process to promote equity and diversity efforts, and the use of Minnesota made solar panels. Minnesota Power's economic analysis demonstrates that construction of these solar projects in 2021 would add an estimated \$10.2 million to the annual Gross Regional Product and boost employment in northern Minnesota by about 38 direct jobs during construction and an additional 35 jobs via secondary economic effects.

Finally, these solar projects demonstrate a commitment to the reinvestment in local communities that have experienced the impacts of coal plant closures as our state transitions towards a cleaner energy economy, specifically in Hoyt Lakes. As he outlined at the Midwest Governor's Association, we share the Governor's desire to empower communities that have been impacted by power plant closures by creating new economic opportunities in the energy sector.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Paul Gazelka in black ink.

Sen. Paul Gazelka
Majority Leader
State Senate, District 09

Handwritten signature of Thomas M. Bakk in black ink.

Sen. Thomas M. Bakk
State Senate, District 03

Handwritten signature of David Tomassoni in black ink.

Sen. David Tomassoni
State Senate, District 06

Handwritten signature of Dave Lislegard in black ink.

Rep. Dave Lislegard
State House of Representatives, District 06B