

March 14, 2022

* sent via email

Dear Chair Long and Members of the Climate & Energy Finance and Policy Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to write a letter of support regarding HF 2200 (Vang) that would establish a city climate action grant program in the Pollution Control Agency. I appreciate the goals of the bill that would “encourage cities to address climate change by developing and implementing plans of action or creating new organizations and institutions to devise policies and programs that seek to mitigate the impacts of climate change on the city; or reduce the city’s contributions to the causes of climate change.”

When I was first elected mayor in 2019, I created the Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force to ensure that all members of the community, especially historically underrepresented communities, have a voice in guiding the development and implementation of a sustainability and resiliency action plan. The task force was made up of over 40 community members, who work with and/or identify with different communities in Rochester. The task force developed strategies that balance environmental, social and economic interests in six focus areas including climate change resilience, accessible transportation, vibrant neighborhoods, City for Health, environmental health, and resilient economy. Grant funding to help us create community support for actual implementation of the plan would be much appreciated.

As far back as 2017, the City of Rochester developed and adopted an Energy Action Plan that sets the City’s greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets using the goals of the Minnesota Next Generation Energy Act of 2007. These goals include:

- 1.5% annual retail energy savings
- 25% renewable energy by 2025 (25X’25 Renewable Electricity Standard)
- State-wide GHG emissions reductions of:
 - 15% by 2015
 - 30% by 2025
 - 80% by 2050

The City would be particularly suited to use the funding from this bill to further implement the recommendations of our climate action plan, even as we discuss updating our energy action plan to reflect more current thinking. We’ve been an active member of other efforts such as Green Step Cities, the bi-national Climate Smart Municipalities Program, Gold LEED for Cities, and Regional Indicators and I currently sit on the Resilient Communities Workgroup of the State’s Climate Action Framework. As Rochester’s Mayor, I also joined other cities by issuing a proclamation calling on 2022 to be a call to action on climate urgency.

I appreciate this committee’s work on energy, sustainability, and climate and opportunities for the state to partner with local governments on these efforts.

Sincerely,



Mayor Kim Norton

Cc: Representative Samantha Vang