

MN350 and MN350 Action organizations exist to make climate justice a reality in MN and the country. That means that we insist that we include and pass the 100% clean energy bill in the Energy Omnibus Bill. This bill puts us on track to make a real difference in the climate crisis and brings us in line with those around the country, including the White House who are taking the climate crisis seriously and providing concrete leadership.

There are a few other things that we would like to lift up in the Omnibus bill as critical for MN to be able to take the next steps in addressing the climate crisis and which also align directly with our work at MN350. 1.56 Million dollars for solar on schools is a small beginning but it is a beginning. We have teams of people, especially in St. Paul who are working now to make this a reality but so far with no support from the state. Solar on Schools not only increases the amount of clean energy on the grid it is an indication to the next generation that we are serious about their future and that we want to be in conversation with them about it. The same can be said for solar in state parks and on government buildings. While we have powerful partners with corporations like Xcel Energy, we must also take up our responsibility as power producers. It is a part of the path to what we in St. Paul350 call "Energy Democracy". The future lies in not just one monolithic energy producer but in all of us playing a part not only in consuming but in producing power. The state can help leverage enthusiasm and participation with these provisions.

Similarly, the provisions for electric school busses, while underfunded are a step in the right direction of indicating the state's willingness to partner with our school communities. MN350's transportation team and our regional team in School District 191 are pushing for school districts to commit to an electric school bus future. While these buses are more expensive on the front end, the cost evens out over the life of the bus. In addition to that, studies have shown that children who are exposed to diesel fumes getting to and from school have a measurable negative impact on their ability to learn and remember. We have the potential to build these busses in Minnesota and we have the children who are waiting for our leadership. Also, the Biden infrastructure plan includes provisions for electric school buses, and we want to take advantage of the opportunity to partner with the federal government in this effort.

Finally, as we are ourselves are stretching our organizing across more of the State of Minnesota, we want to lift up the funding for both the North Minneapolis Training Center and the Solar on Prime Farmland aspects of the bill. While the second may mostly be regulatory decisions the two provisions together make a powerful statement about who we are trying to be. If we are ever going to be "One Minnesota" we have to begin acting like one Minnesota and these provisions are important to us both as stand-alone priorities but also what they represent in terms of us facing the climate justice crisis together.

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