



CONSERVATION MINNESOTA

March 18, 2018

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

On behalf of the Conservation Minnesota members in all 87 Minnesota counties, I write to support HF 239 (Stephenson)—the Natural Gas Innovation Act (NGIA).

As we have expressed to this committee in earlier hearings, Conservation Minnesota appreciates the comprehensive considerations that all sectors of our economy must weigh as we collectively work to lessen the impacts of climate change and prepare various mitigation strategies.

We would like to thank Rep. Stephenson and CenterPoint Energy for narrowly crafting a bill to allow innovative ideas for Minnesota's natural gas providers to utilize new technology to lower the carbon footprint of this sector while promoting novel economic opportunities within the state. We are pleased that the bill includes regulatory oversight from the Public Utilities Commission, a body who has repeatedly expressed interest in promoting new clean energy solutions to solve the climate crisis.

There have been previous concerns that the NGIA could enable or expand concentrated animal feedlot operations (CAFOs) within the state. CAFOs are regulated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) through a number of rules and permits. The MPCA recently revised the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit that applies to large CAFOs, and the revised general permit took effect on February 1, 2021.

Conservation Minnesota strongly supported the changes MPCA recently made in the general permit that requires additional cover crops during manure applications, requires nitrogen best management practices, and prohibits land application of solid manure during February and March. The MPCA has shown a strong interest in ensuring large CAFOs move towards more environmentally protective practices, and the adoption of the NGIA will not impede this positive movement from state agencies.

Furthermore, the NGIA helps innovative Minnesotans become involved in the clean energy revolution that is already underway. If we are going to tackle the existential threat that climate change is, we will need everyone, both rural and urban Minnesotans, rowing the boat in the same direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HF 239.

Sincerely,

Nels Paulsen
Policy Director