

March 15, 2021

Honorable Zack Stephenson
Chairman, House Commerce Finance and Policy committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
509 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Stephenson and members of the Commerce Finance and Policy committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) regarding the Future Fuels Act. UCS is the nation's leading science-based nonprofit putting rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. On behalf of UCS's 6,800+ supporters in Minnesota, we strongly support the Future Fuels Act.

UCS has been engaged with a broad coalition of stakeholders to develop a comprehensive approach to decarbonize transportation fuels in Minnesota. Using a science-based approach that measures each fuel based on its full lifecycle emissions ensures that actors in the fuel supply chain are doing their part to clean up transportation.

UCS supports the Future Fuels Act because:

1. **The Future Fuels Act will accelerate electric vehicles:** Electric vehicles are growing in Minnesota but need a boost. While Minnesota is a leader in biofuel production, EV sales are lagging behind leading states. The Future Fuels Act would support electrification of all modes of transportation directly in proportion to their assessed climate benefits. Together with a [Zero Emissions Vehicles](#) standard for vehicles and [utility programs to build out charging infrastructure](#) for both [passenger vehicles](#) and [trucks and buses](#), the Future Fuels Act can help accelerate a transition to clean electric transportation. **It is important to UCS that the Future Fuels Act includes intent language directing the enacting agency to ensure that the benefits of electrification are equitably distributed, so that all Minnesotans benefit, particularly those underserved or overburdened by transportation pollution.**
2. **The Future Fuels Act will ensure that biofuels production keeps improving:** With advances in technology, biofuel producers have been getting cleaner and more efficient, delivering greater climate benefit from each gallon of biofuel. Most current biofuel policies focus on increasing biofuel consumption, neglecting the opportunity for biofuel producers to further reduce emissions. The Future Fuels Act rewards fuel producers in proportion to the climate benefits their

fuel provides. This means cleaner biofuels get more support, and biofuel producers have an incentive not just to increase production, but to reduce fossil energy use and emissions per gallon. **It is important to UCS that the Future Fuels Act includes intent language to direct the administering agency to protect natural lands from conversion to row crop agriculture. While agriculture and biofuels have an important role to play in broader decarbonization, it is important that biofuels policies do not increase the footprint of cropland devoted to fuel and energy production.**

- 3. A Future Fuels Act will help farmers get into the clean fuel game:** The lifecycle of a biofuel begins on the farm, but today lifecycle-based fuel policies on the west coast have no mechanism for farmers growing biofuel crops to document emissions reductions. Reducing emissions and sequestering carbon on farms translates to lower carbon fuels, so a key focus of the Future Fuels Act is to bring farmers into fuels policy, which will help them get compensated for their work to reduce emissions and improve [soil health](#). A focus on farmers makes sense in Minnesota as a leading biofuel producer. However, the science and policy mechanisms to support farming that reduces overall emissions are at an early stage of development. **A careful and inclusive process will be needed to implement these measures well, and course corrections may be required over time. Moreover, regulators should ensure that incentives within a fuels policy avoid unintended counterproductive outcomes and are structured equitably so that all farmers can benefit, including small and midsize farms, and particularly Black farmers, Indigenous farmers, and other farmers of color**

UCS looks forward to working with the legislature and, upon passage, with regulators to develop a practical policy that advances clean transportation, includes safeguards to protect natural lands and provisions to ensure an equitable distribution of benefits from clean transportation.

Sincerely,

Jeremy I. Martin, Ph.D.

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