



January 26, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for HF164 - Energy Conservation and Optimization (“ECO”) Act

Dear Chair Long and Committee Members,

I am Lee Valencour, President of Plains Energy Services (PES), located in Champlin, MN. Plains Energy Services has a staff of 15 employees who are dedicated to helping businesses save energy, produce their own electricity as well as store their own electricity in a cost-effective manner. As a small business owner in the clean energy industry, I’m writing to support the “Energy Conservation and Optimization Act (HF 164)”. This bill can provide new energy efficiency options to our neighbors, Minnesota’s businesses and residential customers, while driving local job growth during these challenging times.

I’m not only president of a great team, but I have over 20 years of energy conservation experience. My role at Plains Energy Services, is to provide turn-key energy saving and energy producing solutions. I stayed very busy until the pandemic upended my work, as several customers closed up their purse strings once covid-19 hit. Unfortunately, the revenue stream still hasn’t turned around, even as businesses have started reopening their doors.

I understand my customers’ concerns. As a building owner, it’s difficult to make the right energy investments in your building when the future is uncertain. I have one customer with multiple properties and over \$400,000 worth of conservation projects put on hold due to uncertain economic conditions. Rental properties are facing challenges as well, with Minnesotans struggling to make rent. Meanwhile, renters’ energy bills aren’t going away, but property owners face risks in making investments in energy solutions that would help them. These effects cascade, impacting the jobs we help create alongside our local partner contractors.

The ECO Act would help jump-start the industry and get people back to work by expanding the state’s Conservation Improvement Program. This expansion would provide new energy-efficiency options to consumers throughout Minnesota. By passing this bill, legislators can help drive local job growth at a critical moment in time.

Thank you for your leadership for Minnesota’s small businesses during this difficult time. As you continue to legislate during this economic crisis, it’s important to focus on what works and what gets Minnesotans back to work. I believe the ECO Act would accomplish this.

Sincerely,

Lee Valencour
President, Plains Energy Services