

100%

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Chair Nelson and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for the building standards improvements and workforce development provisions within Rep. Nelson's House File 2755, the Walz-Flanagan administration's Department of Labor and Industry budget.

Our transition to a cleaner, more equitable economy means real opportunities to improve the lives of Minnesotans. Cleaner, safer, more affordable homes, family-supporting jobs, and more transportation options are three of the biggest. If enacted, the provisions below will help ensure Minnesotans get to participate in and benefit from this transition.

First, we support the budget's recommended improvements to Minnesota's building codes. These are contained in three of the administration's proposals:

- **Climate Subcabinet: Commercial Energy Code Improvements:** The Commercial Code upgrade would set a net-zero standard for new commercial buildings by 2036. Achieving this will be a critical milestone on our path to a net zero statewide economy by 2050. To get there, the proposal provides an orderly, predictable path for making the transition to net-zero by 2036. It does this by directing the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry to adopt each new published edition of ASHRAE 90.1. The proposal would then strengthen that process by requiring the code be amended to reach at least an eight percent increase in energy efficiency (over 2003 levels) with each new edition.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure:** As more Minnesotans switch to electrified vehicles, we need to make sure our buildings are prepared to meet the new demand for charging infrastructure. This will be especially important in large commercial and residential developments. This proposal would initiate a rulemaking process to engage stakeholders and update our codes, so we're prepared to meet the needs of Minnesotans.
- **Existing Buildings Energy Efficiency:** Minnesota's building codes and SB 2030 standards help move our new buildings toward net-zero carbon emissions. We need something similar for existing buildings. This proposal will do that. It sets a direction for meeting the goal, but does not prescribe a single way to do it. The proposal encourages using the most effective current energy-saving incentive programs, evaluated by participation and efficacy, and developing and implementing new programs, prioritizing solutions that achieve the highest overall carbon reduction. This language encourages the use of best practices for building decarbonization.

Both of these have relatively modest, but necessary staffing costs. These are important investments in making sure building owners, industry professionals, and the public can reach these goals together.

Second, we support the Walz-Flanagan administration's proposed investments in workforce development in the Department of Labor and Industry budget.

Minnesota's clean energy workforce is growing; but our need for that workforce is growing even faster. In 2021, according to a report from Clean Energy Economy Minnesota, nearly 58,000 Minnesotans were working in a clean energy job. However, with the passage of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, we expect the growth of these jobs to accelerate. For example, the Center Energy and the Environment recently released a study estimating that we will need a workforce of at least 1,000 people to weatherize and electrify all one to four-unit residential buildings in Minneapolis. Two proposals in this budget will help us close this gap:

- **Expanding Equity In Apprenticeship:** This proposal would expand the existing Labor Education Advancement Program, or LEAP, to better serve both prospective and enrolled construction trade apprentices who are primarily women and people of color. The increased investments would allow funded programs to grow to meet the needs of both employers and future employees, as well as open the grantmaking to Minnesota's Tribal Nations.
- **Growing Clean Economy Apprenticeships:** The one-time investment of \$3m will help our state's registered apprenticeship programs prepare to train this emerging workforce by providing funds to upgrade the equipment and materials they need to train on clean technologies, like solar and energy storage. This is an important part of the comprehensive, multi-agency, multi-stakeholder approach we need to take to better match Minnesotans with the jobs of the future.

Please include these provisions in the House's Labor omnibus bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

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