

February 24, 2023

Senator Nick Frentz  
Chair - Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee  
Minnesota Senate Bldg.  
95 University Avenue W.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Frentz and Committee Members,

The Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) strongly supports SF 1783 which provides additional funding to the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) partnership.

I have personally worked with CERTs since their very early days, 20 years ago, and R5DC also has many years of experience directly collaborating with CERTs on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. CERTs has proven incredibly effective at providing technical assistance and successfully helped deliver innumerable clean energy projects statewide. Further, staff is accessible and available regionally, and CERTs consistently, continuously and intentionally incorporates community feedback and needs into their efforts. CERTs has done an excellent job of being inclusive and respectful of the wide variety of motivations Minnesotans may have for deploying clean energy.

Interest in advancing clean energy projects has never been higher, and thus the moment is ripe for approving additional funding for CERTs to continue providing the reliable information required for successful clean energy project implementation. The appropriations identified in SF 1783 would support full-time staff regionally, and help advance the many local energy projects in which R5DC is directly engaged. Our partnership with CERTs has truly been invaluable over the years. CERTs has provided a wide variety of assistance, from seed grants for growing ideas to offering critical technical assistance to local governments, schools and small businesses. Staff frequently engages directly with constituents on the ground. For specific examples, R5DC has directly been supported by CERTs in just the last few months in energy efficiency and renewable energy outreach efforts to three small cities, and technical assistance with a local school which subsequently applied for the Solar for Schools grant.

We love CERTs!!! Without this critical funding to allow staff to transition to full-time, and in this very tight labor market, CERTs will be faced with losing incredibly knowledgeable employees and subsequently be unable to provide the high quality support the public has come to expect after so many years. We don't want that to happen to this critical, wonderful Minnesota-grown partnership.

Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions.

Many thanks for your consideration,  
BJ Allen | R5DC & NCEDE Deputy Director  
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