

March 5, 2023

Members, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee

Re: Support for SF 2460 – PUC participant compensation

Dear Senators:

The undersigned organizations and entities represent or support tribal, Indigenous, communities of color, rural, suburban, urban, low-income, youth, faith-based and environmental justice communities. We write in support of SF 2460, which updates the statute that provides compensation to public-interest intervenors in Public Utilities Commission (PUC) proceedings.

Increasingly, the PUC makes important decisions that impact our communities. PUC decisions govern the cost of energy, the selection and location of energy resources, the design of utility rates and programs, options for renewable energy, and even the availability of basic data about utility service and its impacts on Minnesota households.

However, our communities struggle to make our voices heard in these important decision-making processes. Intervening in a PUC proceeding is difficult, time consuming, and expensive. As a result, the PUC lacks a view into how many important decisions will affect Minnesotans – and particularly Minnesotans from those communities that have historically borne the brunt of pollution and unaffordable energy.

This bill provides support for small organizations and Tribal nations to participate in these important proceedings. To be clear, groups have to earn compensation under the bill: it is only available if a participant makes a unique contribution to a proceeding, provides convincing arguments and evidence, and meets a list of other strict criteria. Still, the bill will make possible greater representation of Minnesota’s BIPOC communities and others who struggle to make our perspectives heard today.

We encourage you to support this important bill.

Sincerely,



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Scientists**



cc: Justin Emmerich, Committee Administrator
Joseph Birkholz, Office of Governor Tim Walz