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The Honorable Nick Frentz
Chair, Minnesota Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate
State Office Building Room 3109
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Blvd. Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Frentz and Committee Members,

Fresh Energy is a 30-year-old, Minnesota-based nonpartisan, not-for-profit organization. We work to shape and drive bold policy solutions to achieve equitable carbon-neutral economies. We appreciate the opportunity to offer our perspective on Senate File 2775 (McEwen).

Fresh Energy supports SF2775, which will support decarbonization of residential buildings in Minnesota. While climate warming pollution from major sectors such as electricity generation and transportation have seen reductions in emissions over the past several years, our residential building emissions continue to rise. To change this stubborn trajectory, state leaders must make strategic investments in proven strategies to reduce emissions. Supporting adoption of cold climate air-source heat pumps is a critical solution for addressing climate change in buildings. Additionally, the contractor training and support included in the bill will address some of the market and workforce gaps that exist.

This bill also uses smart building science to maximize the efficiency and decarbonization potential of heat pumps by first requiring an energy audit and necessary insulation and air sealing for the building enclosure. The cleanest energy is the energy we don't use. By reducing the heating and cooling load of a building first, homeowners will see fewer drafts (meaning higher comfort), lower energy bills, and smaller equipment needs once heat pumps are installed.

Accelerating progress in emissions reduction from the residential building sector is critical to achieving reductions consistent with broader scientific consensus goal of reaching net-zero emissions economy-wide by mid-century. Increasing emissions from the building sector is directly undermining the progress that Minnesota is making in other areas of our economy, and we must bend that curve in order to have any hope of achieving decarbonization at a pace consistent with the consensus of our best scientific leaders.

Minnesota has the technology and ingenuity to achieve solutions that work for our climate and our economy. Senate File 2775 makes the right investment at the right time to leverage that technology and ingenuity, and we encourage members to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,

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