

# VESSYLL

March 14, 2023

Minnesota House of Representatives  
Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee  
593 State Office Building  
100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: House File 2524: Energy Alley

Dear Chair Acomb, Representative Kraft, and Committee Members,

My name is Zahra Hargens Iloff and I am the CEO and co-founder of Vessyll. I write to you today to offer our support for the Minnesota Energy Alley bill (HF 2524).

We are an energy startup building a clean energy storage device in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Our storage device acts as a backup generator, as well as a cost savings device. It can help customers avoid peak power usage, deal with power outages, and manage critical power loads in locations such as medical facilities and manufacturing plants. Our battery is unique in the market because it is lithium iron phosphate, not lithium ion, which means it is lower cost, safer, and lasts longer. Storage solutions like ours make the electricity grid more adaptable, which ultimately helps our state achieve the goal of 100% clean energy by 2040.

We launched our business in 2020 because we saw a gap in the marketplace for a product that could help businesses, families, and the environment. As we got started, we competed in the MN Cup pitch competition and have been fortunate to receive some small grants from DEED and LaunchMN. But like many hardtech energy startups, we face significant challenges to get our product built, find investors, and secure our first customer.

These challenges are different for energy startups because customers and investors want to see a demonstrated product in real-world applications, but getting that first demonstration is incredibly difficult. This is often referred to as the commercialization valley-of-death, where startups fail trying to secure pilots and early-stage funding.

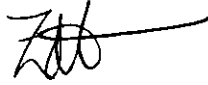
For us, a program like Minnesota Energy Alley would make a significant difference in providing us the connections and resources uniquely designed for energy/hard tech startups. CEEM has provided us with aspects of this support, serving as champions and connectors. But we realize that expanded resources are needed to enable the pilot projects and help them reach and support many more energy businesses. In the absence of this funding and targeted programming, businesses like ours are not set up to succeed based on merit, we are mostly on our own, which means it may take many years longer to enter the market, if we make it at all.

CEEM, Grid Catalyst, and other partners in this work can make all the difference to helping energy startups like ours find success in Minnesota. We want to stay here. We want to grow here. We want to build and hire here. I respectfully ask for your support of House File 2524. We hope you will move Minnesota Energy Alley forward so Vessyll and other energy startups can thrive in Minnesota.

# VESSYLL

Thank you Chair Acomb, Representative Kraft, and the Committee for considering this letter of support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zahra Iliff', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Zahra Iliff  
CEO/Founder  
Vessyll  
zahra@vessyll.com