

April 17, 2023

Chair Marty, Vice-Chair Frentz, and Senator Pratt:

On behalf of the 29,000 members and family members of Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) Minnesota and North Dakota, I am writing to urge members of the Senate Finance Committee to adopt SF 2847 to build on the progress achieved through the passage of earlier bills establishing a path to 100% Clean Energy by 2040 (SF 4) and a State Competitiveness Fund (SF 1622).

LIUNA strongly advocated for SF 4 because we believe the state's 100% clean energy goal can be met reliably and affordably while creating economic opportunity for Minnesota workers and communities. As we said at the time, however, we will only meet these objectives if we provide utilities and others charged with rebuilding our energy with the necessary tools, and avoid raising additional hurdles.

SF 2847 meets this standard. The bill provides essential tools for securing our energy future, including grants for Tribal Nations and electric cooperatives, matching funds for Minnesota Power's critically-needed transmission project. The bill also supports research into advanced nuclear and battery storage technologies that will be needed to ensure our electric grid remains reliable when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine.

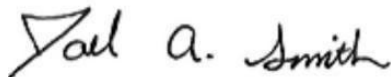
SF 2847 will also help to lower a key barrier to success with provisions to modernize Minnesota's Community Solar Garden program that will reduce costs, raise labor standards, bring transparency to the procurement process, and address existing inequities in the program. And just as important, SF 2847 avoids new mandates for energy storage or other technologies that could ultimately increase the cost of electricity and force utilities onto affordability off-ramps from the 100% clean energy standard.

Beyond supporting progress toward 100% clean energy, SF 2847 includes programs that will support deployment of clean energy and innovation in the agriculture and construction industries through Buy Clean, Climate Innovation Finance Authority, Electric Vehicle, and Green Fertilizer sections. And the bill continues the work of SF 4 when it comes to establishing strong labor standards to ensure that clean energy jobs are just as good, and as available to local workers, as conventional energy jobs with family-supporting prevailing wage requirements on projects funded by the Renewable Development Account and other programs authorized by SF 2847.

Finally, we greatly appreciate the work of Sen. Xiong and Sen. Frentz to amend the proposed expansion of intervenor compensation to address significant concerns raised by the Minnesota Building Trades and clean energy companies over potential for disruption of clean energy progress and misuse of ratepayer funds. We believe that the amended proposal represents a reasonable compromise that will greatly expand the resources available to participants in Public Utility Commission proceedings while minimizing the risk of unintended consequences.

In closing, I encourage your support for SF 2847 and appreciate your attention to this important issue.

In Solidarity,



Joel Smith  
President and Business Manager