

April 17, 2023

Senator John Marty, Chair  
Finance Committee  
95 University Avenue W.  
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3235  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Marty and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I write to express my strong support and to respectfully urge the Senate Finance Committee to pass **SF 2847 1<sup>st</sup> Engrossment**, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Omnibus Bill. **SF 2847** includes important policy and budget items poised to benefit every Minnesotan and help the Commerce Department to continue with its goal to promote clean, reliable, and affordable energy for Minnesota homes and businesses.

As the Committee may know, the Division of Energy Resources at Minnesota Commerce Department serves in regulatory, policy, and programmatic roles:

- We serve as the Minnesota State Energy Office
- We administer both the Low-Income Energy Assistance and Weatherization Assistance Programs
- We provide environmental review for large-scale energy projects,
- We host the energy information center and the energy data repository for the state
- We provide energy-related granting and contracting activities, financing and funding programs, and multiple areas of technical assistance,
- We lead out on energy-related Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act informational outreach
- We oversee MN utilities' Conservation Improvement Program
- We advocate on behalf of the public interest in proceedings involving regulated utilities on energy and telecommunications; and
- We maintain cross-unit functions related to energy reliability, transmission planning, energy resilience and state energy security planning.

While recognizing that not all the funding levels line up exactly, I am deeply grateful to see The Governor's Budget for Commerce has been included in **SF 2847**, namely:

- **Pre-weatherization and workforce training program** to provide more services to additional income-eligible households throughout Minnesota;
- **Strengthen Minnesota homes program** to make homes more resilient to MN's ever-changing climate;

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- **Solar for Schools** to expand this highly popular program to reduce energy costs in schools and serve as a teaching tool for students;
- **The ongoing Grid Reliability Assessment** to ensure effective state, regional, and national planning efforts are coordinated;
- **Energy Resources and Planning** funding to be responsive to an increase in the number and complexity of regulatory proceedings; and finally
- **Continuing agency operations** so that we have the continued capacity to be effective stewards of resources.

I look forward to continuing to work with Chair Frenz on these and other important items in this bill as it moves through the legislative process.

I also want to express my gratitude and support for including a modified version of a high priority Commerce Department policy proposal in this omnibus, **SF 1968 (Kunesh) Tribal Advisory Council on Energy**.

For these reasons, I urge your support of **SF 2847**, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Omnibus Bill.

Thank you,



Grace Arnold  
Commissioner