

March 15, 2024

Minnesota Senate
Committee on Health and Human Services
Minnesota Senate Building, 1150
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Senate File 4074 - Permit changes for groundwater thermal exchange device

Dear Chair Wiklund, Senator McEwen, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM), we write today in support of SF4074, a bill changing permit requirements for groundwater thermal exchange devices. This change helps further the development of Aquifer Thermal Energy Storage (ATES) technology and continues to supply cost-effective low-carbon heating and cooling in buildings.

CEEM is an industry-led, nonpartisan, non-profit organization representing the business voice of energy efficiency and clean energy in Minnesota. We are focused on educating Minnesotans about the economic benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy. Our business membership is comprised of over 60 clean energy companies ranging from start-up businesses to Fortune 100 and 500 corporations that employ tens of thousands of Minnesotans across the state. CEEM stands committed to delivering a 100% clean energy future where all Minnesota businesses and citizens will thrive.

Implementing this change to permit requirements will ensure Minnesota continues to be a regional leader in energy efficiency. ATES is more efficient than conventional heating and cooling because it does not require burning fossil fuels or electricity. According to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), Minnesota ranks in the top 10 nationally and first in the midwest for its overall energy efficiency programs and policies. As detailed in the Minnesota Climate Action Framework, greenhouse gas emissions from commercial buildings have risen 15% and from residential buildings 32% since 2005 levels, reversing this trend will require low-carbon and energy efficient building technologies such as ATES.

Utilizing ATES technology will require a smaller footprint compared to traditional geothermal energy systems by using a series of wells and piping that move heat between buildings and the local aquifer. This allows for buildings to be heated and cooled without on-site natural gas consumption. Supporting low-carbon alternatives like ATES allows Minnesota to make important progress towards achieving its 100% clean energy by 2040 goals. We thank Senator McEwen for carrying this bill and Chair Wiklund for hearing it in committee today. We look forward to the passage of SF4074. Please let us know if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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