



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114
612-659-9124
sierraclub.org/minnesota

January 27, 2025

Chair Frentz and members of the Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee,

Sierra Club's Minnesota North Star Chapter represents 50,000 members and supporters working to help our state's communities flourish through environmental protection, and we appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding SF 350 and SF 468.

The Sierra Club strongly opposes lifting the moratorium on new nuclear plants in Minnesota.

Nuclear continues to pose grave risks, negatively impacts environmental justice communities today, harms water resources, and leaves a toxic legacy that will burden future generations.

That is why the Minnesota legislature first considered a moratorium on new nuclear plants back in 1971. The moratorium, now in law for over 25 years, continues to be a wise and sensible step that says we cannot further add to a problem that doesn't yet have an acceptable solution.

One of our top concerns is safety. In Minnesota, our two nuclear plants are located on the banks of the Mississippi, where an accident would harm local communities and millions downstream. Besides reactor safety, the required long-term storage of high level waste, for which there is still no viable solution, makes nuclear power a uniquely dangerous energy technology.

Nuclear energy is an environmental justice issue, causing radioactive contamination throughout its life cycle, especially for low income and Indigenous communities living near uranium mines, mills, plants, and waste storage facilities.

Another problem is the cost of new nuclear proposals, which continues to increase while clean, renewable energy becomes more affordable. Dollars could be used more effectively by investing in wind, solar, storage, energy efficiency and grid modernization, and create many more jobs per dollar invested. Subsidies for nuclear divert needed investment from clean energy and the development of new clean technologies. We are also concerned about impacts on Minnesota's unique water resources and the communities that depend on them. Cooling at nuclear plants requires significant amounts of groundwater.

In closing, Nuclear power is controversial for good reasons, and much better solutions exist for our power needs. Every dollar spent on nuclear is one less dollar that can be spent on truly safe, affordable and renewable energy sources. Having the moratorium in place does not mean we cannot talk about nuclear energy, but we first need to address the risks and concerns. We agree with the leaders that came before us, that until solutions can be found to answer those concerns, the nuclear moratorium should remain.

Margaret Levin
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter