



ITASCA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

1201 7th Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
(218) 326-9411
www.itascadv.org

April 2, 2025

Minnesota Senate
Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
Saint Paul, MN 55103

RE: Senate File 761 Minnesota Energy Alley Bill

Dear Chair Frentz, Vice Chair Xiong, Ranking Minority Member Mathews, and Committee Members,

As a leading organization supporting small business development in rural northcentral Minnesota, I write today to express my strong support for SF761, the Minnesota Energy Alley legislation. This important bill builds on the impressive progress and impact the initiative delivers as it serves our region and state's energy entrepreneurs and startup businesses. Already, this strategic investment by Minnesota's Legislature has advanced Minnesota's competitiveness and attractiveness to energy startups and new businesses, elevating our reputation as a go-to region for energy innovation, emerging technologies, and long-term partnerships.

IEDC has a mission to grow the Itasca County economy through education, research, and outreach that creates business opportunities. We are a go-to resource and trusted connector and facilitator that works with a broad range of partners to create an economic ecosystem in Itasca County based on talent, diversity, innovation, and long-term prosperity. We are home to a Small Business Development Center and The Forge, a space where innovators, students, entrepreneurs, and workers alike can bring forth their curiosity and ambition, evolving their ideas into products, careers, or businesses.

As a partner, we are proud to see that this successful initiative has already spurred business growth and workforce development while attracting private investment, which bolsters our state's economy. On average, energy accelerators catalyze \$6 of private investment for programmatic dollars spent. To-date, Minnesota Energy Alley has already helped its startups raise over \$11 million from the first \$1 million invested. In fact, locally we are hosting a new program rooted in this program and partnering with the Grand Rapids Public Utility Commission.

Investing in Minnesota Energy Alley is a commitment to our state's energy and economic development future. Minnesota is home to over 62,000 clean energy jobs. Those jobs are growing at a rate nearly five times faster than overall state job growth. Notably, 1 in 3 of these jobs are in Greater Minnesota. To sustain this growth, we must have mechanisms to attract, integrate, and build new technologies in our state. It is a competitive landscape, and strategic initiatives like Minnesota Energy Alley are making a difference in delivering solutions that ensure our energy system is more reliable, affordable, and resilient.

On behalf of Itasca Economic Development Corporation, I ask you to support SF761, the Minnesota Energy Alley bill. This legislation is a cost-effective investment, providing immediate and future benefits to our regional economy. Minnesota must act now to maintain momentum and leadership in energy, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tamara Lowney". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Tamara Lowney

President

Itasca Economic Development Corporation