



RE: Lifting the MN Nuclear Energy Moratorium

Dear Governor Tim Walz and members of the Minnesota Legislature,

We, the undersigned Minnesota unions, businesses, scientists, experts, and stakeholder organizations, have come together as the Coalition for Minnesota Nuclear ("Coalition" or "We"). Minnesota faces an unprecedented energy challenge as we work toward 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.

To meet this challenge and secure our energy future, we urge you to lift Minnesota's nuclear moratorium to:

1. Ensure affordable, reliable, carbon-free energy that meets our Zero Carbon Electricity Standard while advancing energy equity
2. Create thousands of high-quality energy careers for generations of Minnesotans
3. Build a more resilient grid that protects our communities from climate-driven disruptions

To achieve these crucial objectives, Minnesota must act now. The state has committed to reaching 100% carbon-free power by 2040. A recent Department of Energy study concludes that decarbonization will require significant expansions of both nuclear and renewable capacity, adding that "nuclear does not 'displace' or 'compete with' renewables." The October 2024 report identifies 700-900 GW (gigawatts) of new clean firm capacity needs in the US.¹ Minnesota's proportion of that buildout would be about 7 GW, and nuclear energy is a proven technology that can provide this reliably at scale. This amount of nuclear power would

¹ [Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Advanced Nuclear](#) (page 1).

guarantee Minnesota stays low-carbon well after we meet our 2040 goals, even with the rapid demand growth projected from data centers and electrification.

At 2023's COP28 climate summit, the United States led a coalition of twenty-four other nations in signing a historic pledge to triple global nuclear power capacity by 2050. In 2024 the U.S. doubled down with an ambitious domestic target of adding 35GW of new nuclear capacity built or under construction by 2035, followed by 15GW annually thereafter. Fourteen of the world's largest financial institutions added their support for these goals. This represents the culmination of four years of enthusiastic bipartisan support for nuclear energy from Congress and the Biden administration, including billions for research, development, and deployment of nuclear. These dollars will only be invested in Minnesota if the 30-year-old moratorium is repealed. To do our part and avail ourselves of these investments, it is time we join states like Wisconsin, Kentucky, Montana, Illinois, and West Virginia—each of which has lifted its moratorium in recent years.

Although opened in the early 1970s, Minnesota continues to benefit greatly from our three reactors at Prairie Island and Monticello, but they won't be here forever. Today they generate half of its clean, zero-carbon, power and employ thousands in their communities. However, the legacy law restricting new nuclear development prevents the expansion of these benefits from new advanced reactors. The largest utility generators are being forced to propose new fossil gas generation to keep the lights on. Beyond electricity, nuclear energy can also aid in decarbonizing other sectors of Minnesota's economy. High-temperature process heat, produced by some advanced reactor designs, could replace fossil fuels used today in Minnesota's paper, chemical, and metal industries. One of many advantages of using heat and power generated by nuclear energy in these ways is the immense energy density of nuclear fuel, which permits a smaller physical footprint and preserves more land for agriculture and the natural environment.

Minnesota's energy landscape is undergoing a significant transformation. By 2035, seven coal power plants in the state will be retired, followed by fifteen gas plants in the decades after. These retiring facilities represent both a challenge and an opportunity. Without

intervention, these valuable industrial locations—already equipped with transmission infrastructure and cooling water access—risk becoming stranded assets. However, by repowering these sites with advanced nuclear technology, we can preserve their role as vital energy hubs while advancing our clean energy goals. This approach would maintain local jobs, protect tax bases, and provide reliable carbon-free power to surrounding communities.

The Bipartisan Policy Center highlights the synergies between retiring coal plants and advanced nuclear facilities in a recent [report](#)², noting that 77% of coal plant jobs are directly transferable to nuclear operations without additional licensing requirements. Moreover, nuclear plants typically offer higher wages³ than their coal counterparts, fostering local economic growth and increasing tax revenues that support essential community services. By leveraging existing infrastructure such as transmission lines and access to cooling water, this transition can reduce project costs and timelines while minimizing land use, creating a win-win scenario for both the environment and local economies for generations to come.

We recognize and sympathize with the environmental justice concerns around used fuel storage, especially for communities located near existing nuclear facilities. However, decades of experience have shown that dry cask storage has caused no harm to public health or the environment. While we remain committed to developing long-term solutions and are heartened that the federal government appears to be making progress on this issue via its consent-based siting efforts, we believe that the threat of climate change is far more pressing and outweighs concerns about temporary on-site storage of used fuel.

Electrical demand in Minnesota is now expected to rise for the first time this century. The demand coming from data centers, electric vehicles, and other electrification efforts will require more capacity and increased reliability. Without decisive measures to expand capacity very soon, Minnesota risks blackouts and energy shortfalls which could have catastrophic

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https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Can-Advanced-Nuclear-Repower-Coal-Country_BPC-Report.pdf (page 4)

³ [Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Advanced Nuclear](#) (page 17)

impacts on individuals and businesses within the decade. [The national agency responsible for evaluating grid reliability](#)⁴ has evaluated Minnesota's grid operator (MISO), to be at the highest level of risk in the country. Today, there remains sufficient time to build new nuclear plants to address this now-known vulnerability. Yet the existing moratorium ties our hands, preventing meaningful evaluation, planning, and construction of nuclear plants. Any formal consideration of this pathway can only take place once the moratorium is lifted.

In sum, the time to repeal Minnesota's obsolete nuclear ban is now.

For the health of our planet, the strength of our economy, and the security of our grid, the Coalition asks the Minnesota Legislature to repeal the 30-year-old nuclear moratorium.

Sincerely,

[The Undersigned Organizations]

⁴ https://www.nerc.com/pa/RAPA/ra/Reliability%20Assessments%20DL/NERC_LTRA_2023.pdf (page 7)

Members as of 1/17/25:

UTILITIES

Dairyland Power

Jason Herbert - VP External Affairs

UNIONS

North Country States Regional Council of Carpenters (MN Carpenters)

Richard Kolodziejski - Government Affairs Director

IBEW State Council

Joel Johnson - Government Affairs Director

Minnesota Pipe Trades Association

David Ybarra - President

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

Scott Hollerud - Business Manager

Minnesota Ironworkers Local 512

Barry Davies - Business Manager

Steamfitters/Pipefitters Local 455

Tony Poole - Business Manager

Int'l Union of Operating Engineers - Local 49 (MN IUOE)

John Pollard - Legislative Director

MN Building and Construction Trade Council

Tom Dicklich - Executive Director

Heat & Frost Insulators Local 34

Albert Byers - Business Manager

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) Local Union 1

Douglas Schroeder - President / Secretary-Treasurer

OPCMIA Cement Masons 633

Chad Morris - Business Manager

Painters & Allied Trades IUPAT District Council 82

Jeff Stark - Business Manager/Secretary Treasurer

TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Michelle Benson

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Matt Baumgartner

Minnesota Rural Electric Association

Darrick Moe, Tricia Elite

NAIOP (Commercial Real Estate Development Association)

Roz Peterson

Minnesota Shopping Center Association
Jeremy Welter

NONPROFITS

Generation Atomic
Eric Meyer

Citizens Climate Lobby - Minnesota
Greg Jason

MN Conservative Energy Forum
Rachel Stuckey

Mothers for Nuclear
Heather Hoff

North American Young Generation in Nuclear
Christine Fletcher

EXPERTS

Dr. James E. Hanson, Climate Scientist

Dr. Kerry Emanuel, Climate Scientist

Grace Stanke, Miss America 2023 & Nuclear Engineer