

A CLEAN ENERGY VICTORY

Minnesota has a successful history of investing in energy efficiency through the Conservation Improvement Program (CIP). The program allows utilities to work with their customers to reduce energy use by investing in weather stripping, efficient appliances, lighting upgrades, and more. Reducing energy waste results in building fewer power plants, which saves consumers money and reduces carbon emissions by about 1 million tons per year.

For several years clean energy advocates have worked on the Energy Conservation & Optimization Act (ECO Act) to permanently secure, update, and expand CIP. During the last two years, ECO has been an important piece in Governor Walz's path to 100% clean energy proposal.

The ECO Act expands CIP to allow utilities to transition to cleaner fuel sources. It will also dedicate up to \$12 million in new spending for efficiency measures for low-income customers, including renters.

During this year's legislative session both **the House and the Senate passed the ECO Act**. The bill had bipartisan support and is the first major piece of clean energy legislation signed into law by Governor Walz.

To see how individual legislators voted on this bill and other important conservation bills, visit:

conservationminnesota.org/voting-records

The work of Conservation Minnesota is guided by your values and priorities. We listen to Minnesotans and focus on solving the conservation problems that matter most to you.

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SUMMER 2021 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SERVING YOU

Most people don't have the time or patience to attend hours of hearings at the Minnesota Capitol but still want to be informed about their top conservation issues.

This year we increased our policy team capacity, allowing us to collect, synthesize, and relay legislative information better than ever.



Paul Austin
Executive Director

During a conference committee meeting, **our new Policy Associate, David Pelikan, recorded Senator Ingebrigtsen threatening to withhold funding for many popular environment-related budgets—**like state parks, the Minnesota Zoo, and more—if the Legislature didn't remove the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's ability to regulate clean air. **Conservation Minnesota used the recording to amplify the threat. Local media then picked up the story, turning it into headline news.**

Ingebrigtsen's ultimatum continued for the rest of the regular session and into the special session. We will watch this debate closely and keep our members informed as it unfolds.

Your support means we can continue to build our capacity to serve you better. Working together we can protect our Great Outdoors.

Itasca State Park, Mississippi River Headwaters



WHAT "BUILD BACK BETTER" MEANS FOR MINNESOTA



In April, President Biden proposed the American Jobs Plan, an economic recovery package that puts people back to work while tackling climate change.

Conservation Minnesota is part of a national coalition working to ensure the following are included in all recovery investments: **tackling the climate crisis** by transitioning to a 100% clean energy economy, **finding equitable solutions** for communities that have been most harmed by toxic pollution, and **prioritizing high-quality union jobs**.

What does that mean for Minnesota? While the legislation is still in the beginning stages, Minnesota could receive nearly \$60 billion in federal funding through the American Jobs Plan. State leaders have identified many projects that would re-shape our infrastructure in a

GREEN LIGHT FOR CLEAN CARS

Minnesota is on track to become the 15th state—and first in the Midwest—to adopt stricter tailpipe emission standards after an Administrative Law Judge approved the Clean Cars rule and recommended it for adoption last month.

In the fall of 2019, Governor Walz announced the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) would use the rulemaking authority granted by the Legislature to adopt stricter standards. Since then, our staff have worked to increase support and combat misinformation related to the rule and electric vehicles.

We leveraged relationships and digital organizing expertise to elevate the importance of reducing climate pollution in our transportation

climate-friendly and equitable way, including the long overdue **land bridge over Interstate 94 to reconnect the Rondo neighborhood, electrifying a full rapid bus fleet across the Twin Cities, and replacing aging wastewater infrastructure and lead pipes** that will deliver cleaner water for all Minnesotans.

There will be many opportunities for Conservation Minnesota members to engage on this potentially historic investment, and we'll be sure to update you as the campaign continues.



sector. Our field team worked with city councils and environment commissions to pass resolutions in support of the rule and generate local public media attention. **Conservation Minnesota members submitted over 1,800 petitions and testimony in support of the rule.**

The rule has a few more steps—including the governor's desk for signing—before it becomes official later this summer. The judge's ruling is truly a win for Minnesotans. **Conservation Minnesota is proud of the key role we played, and we're excited to see more electric vehicles in the years to come.**



cover: June is Pride Month! We value and celebrate our LGBTQIA members, teammates, friends, family, neighbors, and fellow Minnesotans.