

4 Ways You Can Help Renewable Energy as a Citizen

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There are plenty of reasons that public support for renewable energy has been climbing. Many people see building wind and solar energy as a way to diversify America's energy sources to be more homegrown, low-cost and renewable. Some support renewable energy because it does not release carbon emissions, a boon compared to other sources of making electricity. Consumers across the Midwest are benefiting from renewable energy's low price, too. Competition in the energy market is working to drive prices down and making utility bills more affordable.

No matter your reasons for embracing renewable energy, you may wonder how you as a citizen can help further your support for growing renewable energy. Not everyone has the space to erect a wind turbine or install a solar panel on their roof, but there are plenty of other ways to support this clean, reliable source of electricity. Here's what you can do:

1. **Ask your electric utility about their renewable energy programs.** Many electric utilities, the company you pay for your electricity each month, now offer programs you can enroll in and decide how much renewable energy powers your home or business.

For example, [Xcel Energy](#) offers two renewable energy programs: [Windsource](#), which allows you to power your home from wind power, and [Renewable*Connect](#), which powers your home with a blend of solar and wind energy. Xcel Energy customers can elect how much renewable energy they want to power their home in flexible terms. Because Xcel Energy builds its wind and solar farms in the Midwest, customers are supporting local renewable projects like the [North Star Solar](#) project in Chisago County and wind farms like [Blazing Star I and II](#) in southwestern Minnesota.

If your electric utility does not have a renewable energy program to join, ask them if they are considering creating one. Many electricity customers across the nation are [demanding access](#) to renewable energy these days, especially Fortune 500 companies like [Apple, Facebook and Google](#). Electric utilities serve your wants and needs as a customer; tell them you support increased renewables like wind and solar to power your home.

2. **Write to your elected officials and ask them to support renewable energy policies.** While writing to your U.S. Senator or Representative, your State Senator or Representative, or your local elected officials, remember that [your voice matters](#)! Tell them your personal story about why you support growing renewable energy, why they should support policies that help the renewable industry grow and ask what actions they are taking to support renewable energy.

Be sure to check out CGA's [fact sheets](#) on wind energy to include facts in your letter, such as how many jobs, tax dollars, and landowner-lease payments your community is benefitting from. Spend time on our [FAQ](#) and read our [blog posts](#) that describe the [benefits of wind energy](#) to become better informed about how you and your community can benefit from renewable energy.

You may be surprised by how accessible your state and local officials are. Your voice matters to your representatives, and your support for renewable energy can help enact real, meaningful change.

3. **Voice your support for local clean energy projects.** If you live in the rural Midwest, there may be a wind or solar project nearby seeking approval for construction. It's not often that multi-million dollar projects come to small rural communities, and the new jobs, tax revenue, landowner lease payments, and new business it bring to town can rejuvenate the local economy.

Write your local elected officials like your County Commissioner, City Council or Township Board and explain why you think renewable energy is a good thing for your community. Local elected officials will host hearings to gather public opinion of the renewable energy project. Brush up on the benefits [wind energy brings](#) to rural communities, bring your friends to the hearing and speak in support of the project. Even if you aren't a public speaker, your supportive presence at the local meeting is still helpful!

If there is a local renewable energy project in your area, the developer or a group of citizens may have an open Facebook group to discuss how renewable energy is benefitting the community and how you can get involved to grow the effort. If the developer has a local office, stop in, say hello and ask how you can get more involved! Completed wind projects in the Midwest can be found on our [Project Map webpage](#) - see if there is one near you and visit their local office today.

4. **Sign up for the [Champions Newsletter](#) and [follow us on Facebook](#).** Our newsletter provides occasional news about renewable energy in the Midwest, different ways you can get involved in advocating for renewables and more! [Sign up here](#) to stay updated about how you can support renewable energy today.