



## Clean Energy Is Strengthening Minnesota's Future

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Did you know that Minnesota now gets 25 percent of its electricity from renewable sources? Minnesota has been harnessing the raw power of the sun and the wind for more than two decades. Why? There are lots of reasons, but one simple reason rises to the top: it makes good business sense. Companies and utilities across the state have begun building more wind and solar farms because they are the least-cost option for powering our economy.

Low-cost wind and solar power are providing new, well-paying jobs across the state, they're keeping electricity costs low, and they're keeping more of our energy dollars right here in Minnesota. Investing in homegrown, renewable energy today means a stronger, better future for the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

Today, clean energy employs over 59,000 Minnesotans with family-supporting jobs like wind farm technicians, solar panel installers and the necessary manufacturing and construction jobs to build renewable energy projects. [Clean energy jobs in Minnesota](#) are already growing twice as fast as the overall state job market - and 40% of them are in Greater Minnesota. Our state is blessed with great wind and solar resources, and tapping into them puts hard-working Minnesotans to work.

Wind and solar projects are also [investing in the small, rural communities](#) that host them. Rural community colleges are offering a variety of training programs for young people interested in becoming a wind or solar technicians. As most renewable energy projects are built in rural areas, it is possible for these students to find a new, well-paying career near their hometown. In addition, farmers have a new, stable and passive source of income that diversifies their farming operation. They can use it to ride out tough years from low crop prices or drought, and reinvest in upgrading their machinery, sheds, or grain bins. And because a wind or solar project is a new multi-million dollar business in the community, they pay a sizable amount of new, local taxes to the county. Counties often use this revenue to improve roads and bridges, fund local hospitals and emergency services, invest in local schools, and even lower the tax burden for citizens.

Clean energy is also helping to keep our electric bills low. The cost of wind and solar dropped 16 percent and 23 percent respectively over the past year -- and have fallen 69% and 85% since 2009. Cheap electricity is great for ratepayers. The cost of wind and solar has dropped so quickly in recent years, they have become competitive with natural gas and coal plants even without incentives (and wind's tax incentive is ending later this year). In fact, the amount of income Americans are spending on purchasing electricity has hit a [record-low](#) -- and a [recent report](#) shows Minnesotans' monthly electric bills are 13% below the national average.

Investing in low-cost wind and solar energy is a smart economic decision. Renewables have zero fuel cost, which means their low-cost prices will stay low-cost. That protects consumers from the volatility of other fuel sources.

Investing in homegrown, renewable energy also keeps more of our money here in the state. Minnesota doesn't have coal deposits or natural gas. Every year, we write a check for billions of dollars to import fossil fuels from other states. Instead of sending our hard-earned dollars out-of-state, we can keep more

of our money working here at home by investing in low-cost wind and solar power. Every renewable energy project built here in Minnesota means we're putting Minnesota first. And that supports our local economy.

That's why renewable energy is just smart for Minnesota.