

Sixth Annual Clean Energy Business Day Attracts 84 Attendees

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The sixth annual Clean Energy Business Day (CEBD) was held on March 2, 2022. The event provides opportunities for organizations and their members to network with legislators and industry experts, share business stories with lawmakers, and work collaboratively to shape clean energy policy.



CEBD included several segments that created a diverse and meaningful legislative experience for all attendees. The day began with CGA's Peder Mewis and Jamie Fitzke of the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) sharing advice for meeting with legislators. Mewis and Fitzke's presentation to 30 viewers featured tips on what to expect when talking with your representative or senator, as well as how to communicate your policy priorities. The presentation highlighted just how important CEBD is because legislators rarely hear directly from their constituents.

Mewis explained that personalized stories can have a lasting impact on policy decisions, and that the firsthand experiences of the members in attendance can have a substantial influence on legislative outcomes.

Keynote speaker, Commissioner Grace Arnold of the Minnesota Department of Commerce, opened the morning panel with a discussion on Minnesota's clean energy market. Commissioner Arnold was honored to present a proclamation by Governor Walz declaring March 2 as Clean Energy Business Day. This proclamation highlighted the importance of the clean energy economy as an important part of Minnesota's policy agenda.

Governor Walz proclaimed March 2 as Clean Energy Business Day in Minnesota.

The morning panel had an audience of 84 and featured several important leaders in the clean energy transition. This year's group included Senator David Senjem, Chair of the Senate Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee; Representative Jamie Long, Chair of the House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy Committee; Bali Kumar, COO at PACE Loan Group; Channon Lemon, VP of Economic Development for the Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce; and Sterling Sanders, Dispatcher with LIUNA Local 563.

The morning presentations brought attention to some of the important bills moving through Minnesota's legislature this session, including SF 3051, CGA's permitting reform bill. The draft legislation includes several changes to the regulatory process that would enable more efficient approval of renewable energy projects. Representative Long spoke about the importance of the bill, discussing the need to streamline the regulatory process so that projects can move through in a timelier manner.



SF 3051 also includes language that benefits locals, ensuring that the PUC prioritizes projects and utilities that have taken steps to support communities and hire local workers, especially those who were previously employed at retiring fossil fuel facilities. One morning contributor, Lucas Franco, Research Manager at LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota, stated that his organization will continue to support the bill for its inclusion of local workers.

Panelist and Senator David Senjem highlighted the overarching need for collaboration in all clean energy policy, emphasizing the importance of building relationships. Senator Senjem shared that these connections will be essential to the successful development of renewables in rural Minnesota and across the Midwest.



After the panel, attendees were able to meet with their legislators on policies and important clean energy issues in the state of Minnesota. Over 30 meetings were set up, each starting valuable discussions with decision makers on Minnesota's clean energy economy.

Overall, each part of the day was essential to its main goal: to form and build connections between industry members that will help our goal to advance renewables and the clean energy economy in the state of Minnesota.