

November 6, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Flanagan,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to take action to protect the hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans facing extreme energy insecurity due to the federal shutdown, including the disruption of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Far too many Minnesotans already live in a state of energy precarity¹ and we must do more to ensure they can make it through the winter despite a lapse in federal funding.

On October 21st, the National Energy Assistance Directors Association pressed electric and gas utilities nationwide to immediately suspend service disconnections for nonpayment until federal LIHEAP funds are released, and households regain access to financial assistance.² We support this recommendation and call on utilities to follow it. However, additional measures are needed. Many Minnesota households, especially in rural and tribal communities, heat their homes and businesses using propane, fuel oil, and wood delivered to their homes rather than through utility service. Utility shutoff protections do not help these families stay warm. We are also concerned about the many current and former federal employees who are no longer receiving a paycheck or benefits, and who may not qualify for LIHEAP but face a growing energy burden the longer the federal shutdown goes on.

Given this impending crisis, we are asking you to take the following actions to safeguard vulnerable communities and prevent gaps in essential service during the shutdown:

- Mandate that all Minnesota-serving utilities—including municipals and cooperatives—halt shutoffs until LIHEAP funding resumes, and the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is able to distribute assistance.
- Mandate that all utilities suspend late-payment and reconnection fees for the duration of this crisis.
- Direct at least \$3 million in emergency funds into the Reach Out for Warmth program—a needs-based emergency fuel fund—for households that rely on delivered propane, fuel oil or wood as their primary heat source.³

We recognize that the state of Minnesota alone cannot fill the financial void left by the federal government's dereliction of duty. Therefore, we also ask that you use your position to urge the state's wealthiest corporations, including the growing number of data center developers, who

¹ <https://mn.gov/commerce/energy/policy-data-reports/energy-assistance-dashboard/>

² <https://neada.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/PRshutdownshutoffs.pdf>

³ <https://prairiefive.org/programs/reach-out-for-warmth-program/>

benefit from Minnesota's energy and other resources, to step up and be the "good neighbors" they claim to be. Reach Out for Warmth is a program open to contributions from individuals, utilities, energy vendors, and corporations, among others, but which currently is severely underfunded. Minnesota should insist that companies that want to do business in this state are willing to pay their share and help people who live here, especially in emergency situations like we now face.

We applaud your recent efforts to address the funding shortfall for food assistance and ask that you give the same consideration to the essential and potentially life-saving role of the EAP. No one should have to choose between keeping their homes livable and warm, basic health care, or having food on the table. Minnesotans need both protections from utility shutoffs and sufficient funding in the Reach Out for Warmth program in order to weather this man-made crisis.

Thank you for your attention,

Terry Gips, President
Alliance for Sustainability

Michael Wojcik; Executive Director
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Ansha Zaman, National Policy Director
Center for Earth Energy & Democracy

B. Rosas, Policy Manager
Climate Generation

Metric Giles, Executive Director
Community Stabilization Project

Maggie Schuppert, Director of Strategic Initiatives
CURE

Kathryn Ringham,
Elders Climate Action Twin Cities

Lucy Mullany, Vice President of Policy & Communications
Eureka Recycling

Kathleen Schuler, State Policy Director
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Tamela K. Walhof, Director
Lutheran Advocacy – Minnesota

Jane Dow, Co-Chair
Mankato Area Zero Waste and Beyond Plastics Mankato

Aaron Klemz
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Bret Pence, Northern Minnesota Director
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Robert Blake, Executive Director
Native Sun Community Power Development

Gladys Daniela Mejia; Program Director
Resilient Cities & Communities

Margaret Levin, State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Jean Ross, Board Chair
Vote Climate

Patty O'Keefe, Midwest Regional Director
Vote Solar