



JOURNAL

READY FOR 100% CLEAN ENERGY

SARAH CURTIS

We celebrated a clean energy milestone last year with Xcel's agreement to retire the Sherco Coal Plant in Becker, Minnesota, but our next goal is even bigger: accelerating our progress toward 100% carbon-free, renewable energy from sources like solar and wind. On a national level, the #Readyfor100 campaign, which challenges cities to commit to 100% clean energy goals, continues to gain momentum. In the program's first year, 29 cities from San Diego to Philadelphia, to our own Rochester, made commitments to work toward 100% renewables. A number of cities have already achieved their interim goals, proving that powering cities with clean energy is no longer a dream, but fully doable today. So what's important to know as we work toward these goals in Minnesota?



Natural gas isn't a clean energy solution

According to Allan Campbell, co-chair of the chapter's Clean Air and Renewable Energy Committee, a major challenge is the common misperception about natural gas. Decision makers often view gas as a cleaner and economical energy solution, leading to unnecessarily large and long-term investments in gas. While producing energy from natural gas generates less carbon than coal, the process of extraction and transport often results in methane leaks that have more immediate and dramatic impact on harmful climate change. Even worse, the gas infrastructure projects currently being considered on a national scale - including pipelines, plants, and new

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LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

KARA JOSEPHSON AND
JUSTIN FAY



Photo Credit Jennifer Harming Thiede

Elections have consequences. Unfortunately, a consequence of the 2016 election for Minnesota's Legislature was a dire political environment for work to protect our state's clean water, clean air and the health of our communities. Heavily influenced by corporate interests and an ideological agenda, the legislative majority introduced numerous bills aimed at rolling back bedrock environmental protections, clean energy incentives, funding for public transit and more.

These misguided attacks had Sierra Club staff, volunteers and citizen advocates working overtime this session to hold the line in defense of Minnesota's natural environment. Together, working with numerous allies, we were able to fight off some of most egregious provisions, but of course, could not stop them all. See page 6 for a list of the major environment, energy, and transit proposals from this session and what the final outcomes were.

All in all, the 2017 session was most certainly a step backwards for our environment. Of those provisions that passed, among the worst was a change that makes it harder for citizens to challenge controversial mining permits through a contested case hearing. Advanced by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and mining industry groups, this provision sets a troubling new precedent: that land ownership status is an acceptable factor for limiting citizen access to legal remedies such as contested case hearings. This leaves Minnesotans who

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FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



Dear supporters,

Like you, we are gravely concerned about how the current political landscape will affect Minnesota's clean air and water, wild places and climate. Members of our community are facing hateful and discriminatory attacks. Fundamental environmental and health protections are being rolled back.

North Star Chapter leaders are fighting back with renewed energy and determination. Thanks to your support, our deep bench of experienced volunteers, and an outpouring of interest from new activists we are entering these unprecedented times from a position of strength.

Despite the challenges of the last few months our Chapter has taken many steps forward including:

- Launched a Citizen Lobby Network in response to urgent threats at the state level
- Joined other groups in a legal challenge to the PolyMet proposed sulfide ore mine
- Delivered feedback to the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management in support of long-term protections for the Boundary Waters
- Provided in-person orientations for 100+ new volunteers
- With others, turned out 400+ people to speak out against the Alberta Clipper tar sands pipeline, and 1,000 for Water Action Day at the State Capitol
- Supported thousands of Minnesotans who rallied at People's Climate Marches in Minneapolis, Duluth, New London, Rochester, and in D.C.
- Blocked anti-environment proposals at the State Capitol, including fast-tracking of controversial tar sands pipelines

And this August, the chapter will host a three-day Dismantling Racism Retreat to continue our efforts to become a more equitable and inclusive organization. The workshop will challenge how we understand racism and white privilege in our lives, relationships and organizations and provide tools to deconstruct these systems within our own campaigns and work together.

This year much of the responsibility will fall on citizens and organizations to make our voices heard. Right now there are more opportunities than ever to speak up, act on your environmental values and stand with allies who share our vision of a cleaner, more just future.

Thank you for being part of our efforts to protect Minnesota.

Katie Eukel,
Chair, Executive Committee
Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Margaret Levin,
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter



The North Star Journal

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The Sierra Club North Star Chapter, a 501(c)4 non-profit organization, is the leading grassroots voice working to preserve and protect Minnesota's environment. Since 1968 we have involved volunteer leaders to act through environmental advocacy, community organizing and outdoor exploration. We are committed to becoming an intercultural, anti-racist organization and partnering with communities and organizations to eradicate all forms of oppression.

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The North Star Journal welcomes submissions and photographs on environmental and related issues. Articles of less than a thousand words will be given preference. E-mail submissions only. We reserve the right to edit all copy for clarity and concision. Photos can be color and should be a jpeg format of 5x7 size at 300 dpi. Please send all submission materials and requests to the editor.

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STOPPING PIPELINES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

SCOTT RUSSELL

The Sierra Club North Star Chapter is working to “becoming an intercultural, anti-racist organization that is committed to partnering with organizations and communities to eradicate all forms of oppression.”

Some might read this statement and see it as a distraction or overreach, and a deviation from the Sierra Club’s focus on critical and immediate environmental challenges such as stopping the Enbridge Line 3 tar sands pipeline. But make no mistake, this work is core to our success and it is coming at a critical time.

We see new environmental threats daily, from coal deregulation and attacks on national monuments to policies which ignore the need to arrest climate change. We need to join hands with our environmental allies, those in related movements – and every friend we have – to stand strong for a sustainable future. As we have heard from Native American allies: We need to make decisions thinking seven generations out.

The Chapter’s Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee is relatively new, but we have been working together to make sure that equity is central to how we think about our work, such as our plans for stopping the Enbridge Line 3 expansion. While not perfect, we are continuing to work together to learn best practices, unlearn old go-it-alone habits, and live up to our values. One way we’re doing this is to connect with many allies to further this important work.

For instance, we collaborated on efforts to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) by supporting the November 15 rally at the St. Paul office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Native-led event urging the Corps to deny DAPL permits. We did this because we know that how this country has treated Native Americans and how we treat the environment are not separate issues, but deeply connected.

We also supported the February 14 Missing and Murdered Indian Women’s March. We hosted a sign-making event at our office. Sierra Club volunteers and partner groups then marched down Franklin Avenue to the Minneapolis American

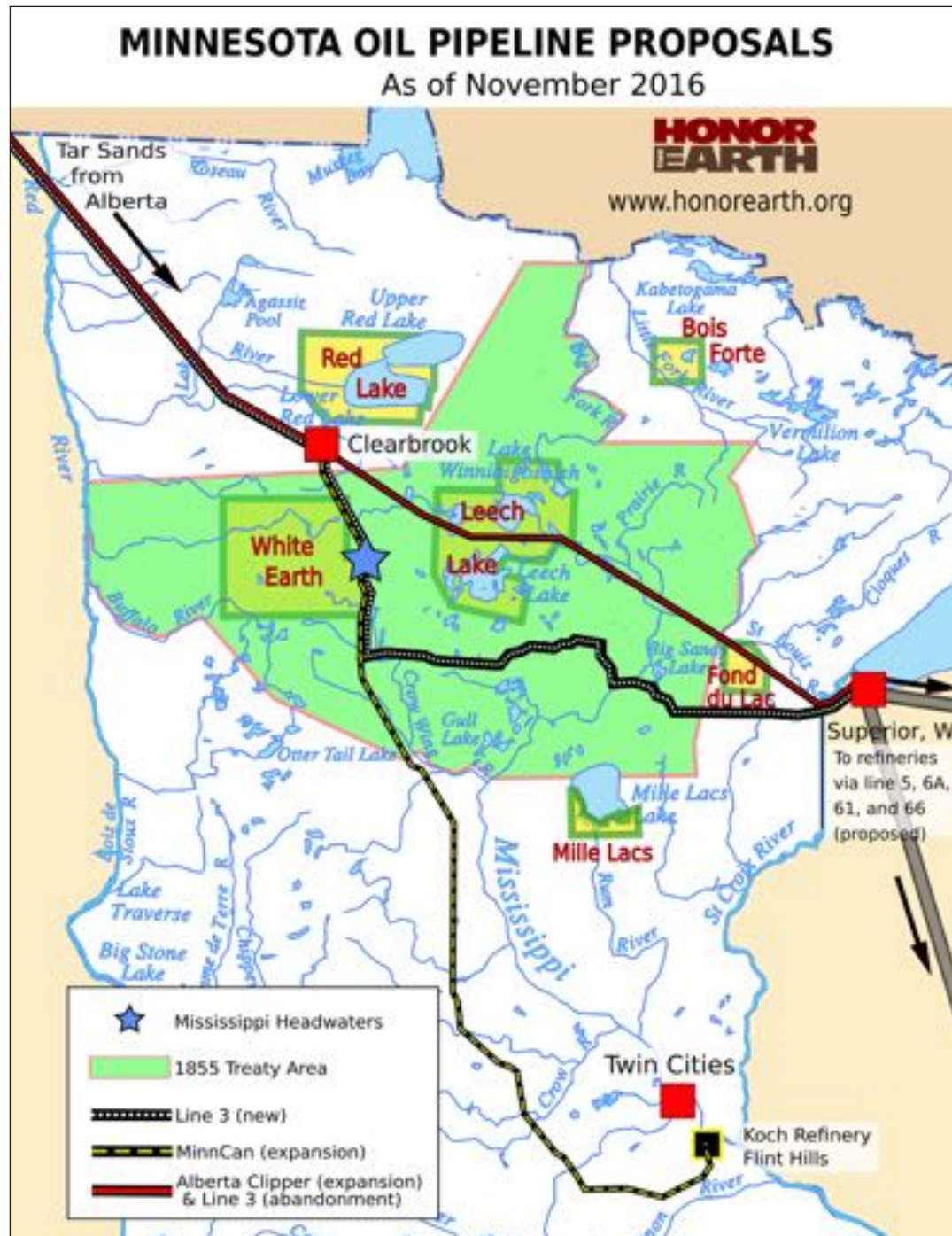


Image credit Honor the Earth

Indian Center where we joined the main march. We did this because we know that how we treat women and how we treat Mother Earth are not separate issues, but deeply connected.

On March 7, we collaborated with Honor the Earth and MN350 to get two busloads of people to Bemidji. This collaboration afforded us our only opportunity to speak to the U.S. State Department to urge it to deny a border crossing permit for an Enbridge crude oil pipeline. (OK, the State Department didn’t really listen to us and we drove home in a snow storm, but this was still important relationship-building work.)

We will continue to build relationships and watch for partnership opportunities as a critical component of our

environmental mission. We are now focused on stopping the Enbridge Line 3 expansion, a proposal to abandon its current failing pipeline in the ground and lay a new and larger pipeline across a 337-mile stretch of northern Minnesota.

Enbridge’s plan includes a new route that would take the pipeline through the Mississippi Headwaters region and prime wild rice areas, threatening some of the state’s cleanest waters. The pipeline crosses large sections of land covered by the Treaty of 1855, which gives the Ojibwe hunting, fishing, and wild rice gathering rights. Partnering with Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) communities will be key to this work.

We will ask for your help in the coming months. The draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Enbridge Line 3 was released May 15, starting a 60-day comment period. The state will issue a final EIS this fall. The final PUC decision is not expected until 2018. At each critical step in this process, we will need you to call and/or write Gov. Mark Dayton and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and attend PUC meetings.

Keep watching our blog and e-blasts for updates. For those interested, join us at our monthly planning meetings, the fourth Tuesday of the month, 6:30

– 8 p.m. at the Sierra Club office, 2317 East Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.

Lastly, we are creating an Enbridge Line 3 Speakers Bureau. If you are interested in having a presentation at your school, community organization, or religious community, please contact Natalie.cook@sierraclub.org.

Scott Russell is a volunteer leader with the Beyond Oil and Tar Sands Committee.



Photo Credit Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters

PROTECTING THE BOUNDARY WATERS: STRONG VOICES AT HEARING AND RALLY IN DULUTH

MATT NORTON

On March 16, the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters and partners gathered in Duluth as part of an official public hearing at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, to speak up for the protection of the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining. Just before the hearing, which was part of the scoping process for the two-year environmental review now underway, supporters of saving the Boundary Waters held a rally, complete with We Love the BWCA signs, and rousing speakers who addressed the risks of sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters.

During the meeting, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management heard comments from business owners, Arrowhead residents, citizens from across the state who enjoy wilderness recreation and clean water, and sportsmen and women. They also heard from supporters of sulfide-ore copper mining.

Speakers supporting protection of the Wilderness shared the critical points they believe should be considered during the two-year environmental review, including the economic impact a sulfide-ore copper mine would have on tourism and outdoor recreation economy, the risky history of this type of

mining, the damage pollution from sulfide-ore copper mining would do to the ecosystem and human health, and much more.

People spoke 31 to 22 in favor of protecting the Wilderness and continuing the current environmental review on the sensitivity of the Boundary Waters Wilderness watershed, and the risks of sulfide-ore copper mining. We are proud of our supporters including North Star Chapter Executive Committee member Tom Thompson who shared comments during the hearing. If you missed the Duluth public hearing, or you attended but didn't get a chance to speak, please know that this important public comment meeting will be followed by others. You also should be aware that there has been a 120-day extension of the comment period, which now concludes August 11.

During the remainder of this comment period, it is critical for all supporters of protecting the Boundary Waters to submit comments and raise their voices. We ask that you ask your friends and family members to submit comments as well. We'll share any information on subsequent comment meetings when they are announced. At the conclusion of the comment period, the U.S. Forest Service will begin drafting

the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Later, likely in early 2019, a Final EIS will be released, and then, perhaps some months later, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will make a decision about whether to protect this watershed for a 20-year period.

This two-year environmental review process runs on public input, and your input absolutely will be required again, not only at the next public hearing and in the remainder of this comment period, but again once the U.S. Forest Service has released the DEIS, and finally when the FEIS is published. Your public lands, and the future of the Boundary Waters, are certainly worth it.

Make sure to submit your comment before the August 11 deadline! Take action today at sc.org/saveboundarywaters

Matt Norton is Policy Director for the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters.

Article originally posted by the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters at www.savetheboundarywaters.org. Reprinted with permission.

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extraction - represent a multi-decade investment in fossil fuels detrimental to our personal health, natural habitat, and climate.

For too long we’ve thought of natural gas as a bridge between coal and renewable energy, anticipating that gas would provide a reliable source of power until battery storage and transmission technology improved in wind and solar. However, the discussion around gas needs to change. We can set - and meet - aggressive clean energy goals by rethinking our investments. Redirecting the proposed gas project funding into renewable fuels like solar and wind would have significant impact, acting as a catalyst for renewable energy on a larger scale, driving technology advancement through competition and further reducing the already decreasing costs for renewables in the process.

Economic factors support clean, renewable energy

In the past seven years, costs for wind and solar energy decreased by 66% and 85% respectively according to Lazard’s 2016 analysis. By December 2016, wind and solar energy was actually cheaper than coal and gas, so the economics support expansion. Industry acknowledges the lower costs and the higher benefits of clean energy and is exploring how to make it work on large-scale energy projects.

Clean energy means jobs. Data collected by Governor Dayton’s office shows that Minnesota jobs in this sector grew by 78% between 2000 and 2014 in comparison to overall employment growth of 11% during this period. Today more than 170 clean energy businesses operate in Minnesota, employing over 54,000 people. Approximately 21% of our energy production is currently from renewable sources. Increasing that percentage

to 50% would create an estimated 1,500 new jobs annually. We also currently import \$13 billion in energy from other states and countries each year. Locally-sourced renewable energy could keep those energy dollars in Minnesota. Developing clean energy also means growth opportunities for our technology sector. Global energy demand is projected to increase by 31% by 2030, representing an attractive growth market for businesses able to meet this demand with clean energy. (Statistics from Minnesota is Ready for 100% Clean Energy, 2017 and Fact Sheet: 50 by ’30 Renewable Energy Standard, 2017)

A unique opportunity for equity and inclusion

Jessica Tritsch, Senior Organizing Representative with the North Star Chapter, stresses that all Minnesotans can – and should – benefit from a transition to 100% renewable energy. She notes that communities of color and lower-income communities are disproportionately impacted by fossil fuel pollution and says, “As we invest in renewable energy, we need to prioritize solutions that support these communities in reducing pollution, creating jobs, and ensuring access to renewable energy and energy efficiency.” Other Minnesota communities, where the fossil fuel industry has been the primary economic driver, will also be impacted by a transition away from fossil fuels. Considering these communities, Jessica says, “We must ensure that workers and community members are part of planning the move away from fossil fuels to find solutions in their communities.” The key takeaway: if we move forward intentionally and thoughtfully, Minnesota’s transition to 100% clean energy can have wide-reaching community benefits. It’s a truly unique opportunity to impact economic and racial justice in Minnesota.

Build the momentum

Clean energy is no longer a dream for Minnesota. We’re already a leader in wind energy production, ranking sixth nationally in 2016, and a number of municipalities are establishing or renewing their commitments to renewable energy. While the current political climate at the federal and state level is challenging, the good news is that real progress toward 100% renewable energy is happening at the local level. We can all make an impact today.

What you can do:

- Talk to decision makers - your city officials or town board, your mayor, influencers at your company. Progress is happening at the municipal and corporate level, especially through new initiatives and as part of new developments or redevelopment planning.
- Get involved in local conversations about energy decisions. Many #Readyfor100 success stories come from cities with cross-industry efforts between the local governments, nonprofit groups and private industry. Find out what’s happening in your area and get involved.
- Ask questions and be ready to inform. Seek out your elected officials’ and candidates’ views on renewable energy and continued investment in fossil fuel infrastructure. Help them understand why investment in gas isn’t the answer and that the opportunity lies in renewable fuels.
- Attend our 100% Clean Energy Leadership Training day coming this fall!

Sarah Curtis is a volunteer leader with the Communications Team.

GO GREEN WITH AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

BRUCE GOFF

On-road vehicles create 25% of the air pollution in Minnesota. Through walking, biking, using public transit, or getting a more fuel-efficient car, we can all play a part in improving the quality of



Photo Credit Sierra Club

our air. With that in mind, my family recently replaced our 17-year-old 6-cylinder minivan with a fully electric 2015 Nissan Leaf. Here’s what we’ve learned in our first year with our new electric car.

What are the environmental benefits?

The main benefits of electric vehicles (EVs) are reduced air pollution and a smaller carbon footprint. Our grid-powered 2015 Leaf produces about one-third as much carbon dioxide and one-quarter as much nitrogen oxides as a comparable gas-powered car.

Is it practical?

The Leaf - and most modern electric cars - can travel 100+ miles on one charge. The range is sufficient for a daily commute and weekend errands. Battery technology is improving rapidly, and most manufacturers plan to have models that can run 200+ miles per charge by 2019.

As far as maintenance, you will not have to change oil, although other fluids and tires should be checked regularly.

Winter is not an issue. Due to a low center of gravity and battery weight, our car handles snow well. In extreme cold weather, we noticed that the battery holds slightly less charge (about 18 fewer miles), and we get slightly less mileage when we turn on our heated seats and steering wheel.

Is it affordable?

While there are large up-front costs to consider, rebates and tax incentives will make your purchase of an EV more affordable. Our family shopped around and was able to find a slightly used car online (less than 1 year old and under 10 thousand miles) for about half the price of a new model. Here are a couple cost-saving measures to keep in mind:

- Tax Rebates - If buying a new vehicle, you will be eligible for a federal tax rebate of \$2,500 - \$7,500, depending on your battery. Batteries that store 17 kilowatt hours or more provide the maximum rebate.

- Incentives from your electric provider - We are customers of Dakota Electric, which gave us a \$500 rebate on the purchase our car charger. Also, as part of Dakota Electric’s “Revolt” program, all electricity used to charge our car is eligible for a renewable energy credit.
- Charging Plans- We only charge our car during certain overnight hours, which gives us a cheaper rate of only \$0.04 per kilowatt hour, or \$1.20 per 100 miles. My daughter’s hybrid Prius, in contrast, costs \$5.50 for the same distance.

In Conclusion

We love this new second car for our family. This is our go-to car for errands, and we all feel good about driving it. Even the kids coming back from college like it. No car will be completely environmentally friendly, and there’s always the bigger question of how our electricity is produced. But this is a small step towards reducing our environmental footprint that we are very happy with.

Bruce Goff is a volunteer leader with the Clean Air and Renewable Energy Committee.

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rent, small businesses with a lease, recreational users of public lands and other stakeholders with a steeper climb in order to successfully challenge decisions on permits to mine.

Another deeply troubling provision was a weakening of protections for clean energy customers served by rural electric cooperatives and municipal utilities. Back in 2015, the Legislature allowed these utilities to apply fixed charges on clean energy customers who use net metering. Predictably, some utilities immediately began abusing this authority by applying unreasonable and discriminatory fees on customers who installed home-based small wind and solar options. The one protection in existing law for these customers has been oversight by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, and even this nominal control was removed for most net metering customers this session. Governor Dayton vetoed similar legislation early in the 2017 session, however another (modestly compromised) version of this legislation was signed into law as part of the final budget agreement.

One of the most frustrating aspects of this session was the incredibly poor public process used to advance these ill-conceived bills. Despite starting in January, the majority of the bills, including the large omnibus “budget” bills filled with unrelated policy provisions, were introduced and passed quickly in the final hours of session (and subsequent Special Session), oftentimes in the middle of the night, with little to no opportunity for public input or participation. Even the legislators themselves, especially those in the minority party, were often given little notice or time to read the 100+ page bills before being asked to vote. How bad did it get? At one point, #darkofnight was a trending hashtag on Twitter! As a grassroots, volunteer-led organization, we vehemently oppose this model of governance, and urge leaders in the House and Senate to take public participation and transparency seriously in future sessions.

Despite these incredibly difficult circumstances, Sierra Club members and volunteers rose to the occasion - as they always

seem to do! Thanks to thousands of phone calls, post cards, emails and letters, we kept the pressure on legislators all session long. And despite some significant setbacks, the impacts are clear: we defeated efforts to circumvent public oversight for tar sands pipelines, protected proceeds from the Volkswagen settlement for critical clean air resources, kept our public agencies intact and defended the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board.

Thank you to everyone who took action this year. Our work is never finished - the next session is a mere eight months away - but with your ongoing help and support, we will continue to stand up to special interests and ensure that Minnesota’s natural legacy will remain intact for generations to come.

Kara Josephson is Legislative Coordinator and Justin Fay is Senior Chapter Representative for the North Star Chapter.

Environment Provisions Sierra Club Opposed

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Transferring final decisions on contested case hearings from an agency Commissioner to the Office of Administrative Hearings	Not included in final bill
Transferring final decisions on science underlying all water-related decisions by the MPCA Commissioner to the Office of Administrative Hearings	Not included in final bill
Allowing contested case hearings on draft impaired waters list	Not included in final bill
Duplicative external review of agency rules, standards and permits	Not included in final bill
Requiring legislative appropriation of VW Settlement funds (estimated to be \$47 million for MN), which could risk our state’s eligibility to receive the funds	Not included in final bill
Doubling the size a proposed feedlot can be (up to 2,000 animal units) before environmental review is triggered	Not included in final bill
Allowing counties to adopt “no net gains” of public lands rules	Not included in final bill
Rollbacks to buffer law	Not included in final bill; new language to allow extensions on individual basis agreed to in final negotiations
Environmental Quality Board elimination	Not included in final bill; final bill does make changes to Board membership and eliminates some existing duties of the Board
Reducing supply of groundwater to calcareous fens	Compromise language included in final bill allows, rather than requires, DNR to issue water appropriation permits (modest but insufficient improvement)
Eliminating MPCA authority to adopt air quality rules for silica sand facilities	Compromise language included in final bill retains MPCA’s authority to complete these rules
Limiting citizen rights to a contested case hearing for mining issues based on property ownership	Included in final bill
Allowing permit applicants to buy their way into an expedited permit	Included in final bill
Requiring agencies to begin permit review process before the data is complete	Included in final bill
Allowing polluters to prepare their own draft EIS	Included in final bill
Exempting cities that build public water treatment facilities from having to make updates to comply with clean water standards for 16 years	Included in final bill
Delaying rules limiting use of lead shot	Included in final bill
Raiding \$22 million of Legacy Amendment Clean Water funds for ongoing general operations for local Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state	Included in final bill

Environment Provisions Sierra Club Supported

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Establishing goal of improving water quality by 25% by the year 2025	Not included in final bill
'Prove it first' mining bill	Not included in final bill

Energy Provisions Sierra Club Opposed

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Exemptions from the certificate of need process for oil and gas pipelines	Not included in final bill
Restricting the consideration of alternative routes for pipelines	Not included in final bill
Requiring legislative appropriation of VW Clean Air Act Settlement funds (estimated to be \$47 million for MN), which could risk our state's eligibility to receive the funds	Not included in final bill
Forcing PUC to prioritize job retention and economic development above other considerations when reviewing integrated resource plans	Not included in final bill
Politicizing the Public Utilities Commission by having members appointed by all four political caucuses as well as the Governor, and removing recent Dayton appointees before their term was scheduled to end	Not included in final bill
Removal of PUC oversight of fixed charges brought by rural electric cooperatives on solar customers	Compromise language included in final bill allows coop customers to obtain a mediator with coop picking up majority of the cost
Eliminate Renewable Development Fund, replace with unrestricted legislative fund and sunset payments from nuclear dry storage casks	Compromise language included in final bill includes some statutory guidance and no longer sunsets the fund payments
Eliminating Made in Minnesota solar manufacturing program	Compromise language included in final bill expands and extends the Solar Rewards production incentive program for 3 years
Exempting small utilities from the state's Conservation Improvement Program	Included in final bill
Plastic bag preemption	Included in final bill; final language does not include a ban on fees/taxes as proposed in earlier versions
Authorizing Xcel to bypass the PUC's certificate of need process to construct, own, and operate a natural-gas power plant on the site of the current Sherco coal-fired plants	Passed into law as a stand alone bill early in session (HF 113)

Energy Provisions Sierra Club Supported

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Establishing statewide goal of 50% renewables by 2030	Not included in final bill

Transportation Provisions Sierra Club Opposed

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Requiring legislative appropriation of VW Clean Air Act Settlement funds (estimated to be \$47 million for MN), which could risk our state's eligibility to receive the funds	Not included in final bill
Governance changes to the Metropolitan Council	Not included in final bill
Language benefitting suburban opt-out providers at expense to Metro Transit	Not included in final bill
Restrictions to local units of government on constructing light rail	Not included in final bill
Base funding cuts to Metro Transit	Final budget includes \$70 million in "one time" funding for Metro Transit; not adequate to avoid damaging rate hikes and potential service cuts
Electric Vehicle Fee of \$75 per year	Included in final bill

State Government Provisions Sierra Club Opposed

INITIAL PROPOSAL	FINAL OUTCOME
Rulemaking provisions from Chamber of Commerce's bill (HF 1433) that would've significantly restricted the ability of agencies to regulate our air, water, food, etc.	Not included in final bill

SIERRA CLUB JOINS LAWSUIT TO HALT POLYMET LAND EXCHANGE

LORI ANDRESEN AND ELANNE PALCICH



Acid Mine Drainage in a stream Photo credit USGS

On March 27, 2017, the Sierra Club joined with Save Our Sky Blue Waters and the Save Lake Superior Association in filing legal action against the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land exchange with PolyMet.

PolyMet is seeking a permit to mine for the first ever sulfide mine in Minnesota. The mining of sulfide ores is known to create a toxic legacy of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) and toxic heavy metal leaching. PolyMet's own Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) states that water would need to be treated for at least 500 years, virtually forever.

PolyMet's plan calls for a massive open-pit copper-nickel sulfide mine on what is now protected Superior National Forest land. The USFS is ignoring its own mandate to protect land acquired under the Weeks Act for river and watershed protection. Approving the land exchange for PolyMet's destructive mine is especially egregious, since the PolyMet mine would be located on the headwaters of Lake Superior, an internationally important watershed.

Rather than rejecting PolyMet's destructive open pit mine plan, the USFS opted to approve a land exchange. PolyMet would acquire more than 6,000 acres of Superior National Forest (SNL) in exchange for private lands; the exchanged forest lands would be turned into a massive sulfide mine site consisting of open pits and waste rock piles.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the conifers and open bogs of the exchange area and surrounding wetlands are considered Aquatic Resources of National Importance (ARNI) in terms of unique habitat, biodiversity, downstream water quality, and flood control, specifically to

the Lake Superior Watershed and the Great Lakes Basin. By approving the PolyMet land exchange, the USFS is ignoring the value of this landscape to the Arrowhead Region of Minnesota and to the nation.

The decision by the USFS to allow the PolyMet land exchange follows a series of concessions to mining companies that dates back to the beginning of taconite mining in the 1950s. Meanwhile, state agencies have continued to overlook increasing destruction and pollution from taconite mining.

We cannot accept the poisoning of our waters with toxic sulfide mine waste, including mercury, arsenic, copper, nickel, and other toxic heavy metals that harm aquatic life, wildlife, and, ultimately, human life. This is an unacceptable risk to our water, our children, and all who live downstream, including the residents of Fond du Lac, Cloquet, Duluth, and Superior (Wisconsin). The opening of a sulfide mine district in the Superior National Forest would impact fish, birds, plants, amphibians, reptiles, and other wildlife, some of which are endangered or threatened, and would forever alter and degrade Minnesota's beloved Arrowhead.

The Sierra Club's North Star Chapter State Director Margaret Levin emphasizes, "This is not the legacy we want to leave for our children and grandchildren. The land exchange should be rejected, along with PolyMet's plan – which would pollute water for centuries, destroy thousands of acres of wetlands, and risk the health of people downstream."

By agreeing to a land exchange, the USFS is going against its own mission statement: "To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the

needs of present and future generations."

Continue to call your local politicians, state and federal legislators, and the Governor in opposition to PolyMet and the acceptance of highly-polluting toxic sulfide mining in the water-rich region of northeast Minnesota. Many politicians believe that they cannot be elected unless they support mining. Yet this concept is keeping us dependent upon low-grade, energy-intensive open-pit mining which is highly destructive to our land and water, to the boom and bust cycles of mining economics, and to a throw-away culture that bears no responsibility for the use of resources and the preservation of resources for the future. We need to let our politicians know that we value our water resources as highly as we do our minerals, that clean water is crucial to a thriving future for our children and grandchildren, and that a legacy of forests, wetlands, and wildlife is an irreplaceable gift to future generations.

Numbers to call include:

Governor Mark Dayton at 1-800-657-3717

U.S. Sen. Al Franken at 202-224-5641

U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar at 202-224-3244

Find your state and federal legislators' information online (<http://www.gis.leg.mn/iMaps/districts/>).

Lori Andresen and Elanne Palcich are Co-Chairs of the Mining Committee.

WHY TRANSIT?

ERIN DALY

As a volunteer with the Land Use and Transportation Committee, I am often met with surprise when I talk about the Sierra Club's work on transit. Both long-time supporters and those newly discovering the chapter don't normally associate things like transportation access and density with our more traditional focus on clean energy and environmental protection, even though that is what drives many of us (figuratively) to this work.

Transportation accounted for 27% of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. last year, according to the EPA. Volunteers at the North Star Chapter are working to reduce that figure by creating more efficient options to get us where we need to go, via safe bus, rail, bike lanes or walking connections. In 2015, Americans took over 10.5 billion trips on public transit systems alone, saving 4.1 billion gallons of gasoline. If ridership keeps increasing at its current trajectory, that could amount to 5.7 billion gallons by 2025. That's the equivalent of taking nearly two million cars off the road!

Transportation emissions are also a significant environmental justice and public health concern. Often highways are routed through a city's lowest income

communities, with residents of color facing the worst impact of tailpipe pollution. In advocating for a stronger transit system, we aim to reduce dependence on single vehicle occupancy trips and overall emissions in these corridors. Given greater access to alternative transit opportunities (including biking and walking), we can reduce the number of cars on our roadways and create healthier options for those using and living near our transportation infrastructure.

So when you think about it, it just makes sense for the Sierra Club to be here. If we're serious about our goal of reducing oil consumption in the U.S. by at least 50 percent by 2030, the transportation sector is going to need some attention. And if we're serious about making healthier, more resilient communities and spaces for outdoor recreation, we can't afford to ignore this opportunity.

The Land Use and Transportation Committee generally meets the first Monday of the month at 6:00pm. For details, contact Joshua at 612-259-2447 or joshua.houdek@sierraclub.org.

Erin Daly is Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee.

U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emission Sources by Sector, 2013

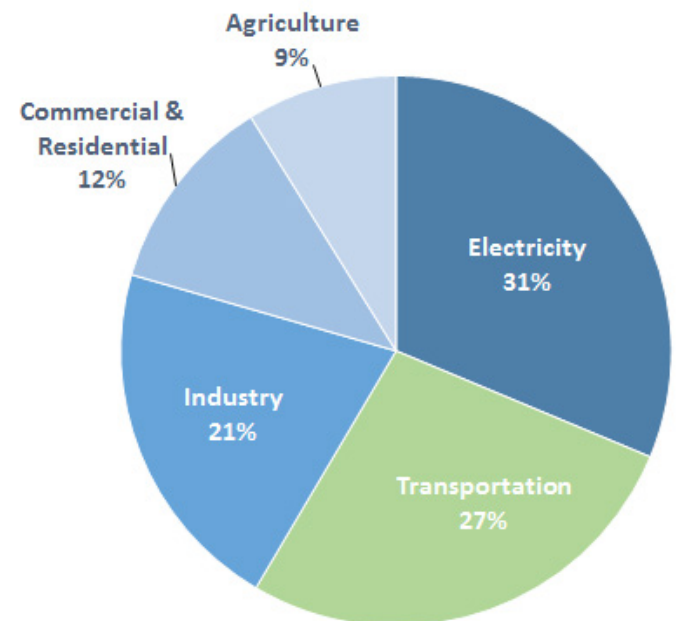


Image source: www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions

WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

Ensure your environmental legacy by naming Sierra Club or your favorite Sierra Club Chapter in your will or trust. These gifts cost you nothing now. You can hold on to your assets for as long as you need them and you can change your beneficiaries at any time.

If you have named Sierra Club or your Chapter as a beneficiary or would like to discuss doing so, please contact us today

LORI SULLIVAN
 Director of Gift Planning
 2101 Webster St, Suite 1300
 Oakland, CA 94612

(800) 932-4270
gift.planning@sierraclub.org
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Support the Minnesota Chapter

While your membership dollars are crucial to support the Sierra Club's local, regional and national campaigns, you also have the option to donate directly to the North Star Chapter. 100% of your additional contribution to our Chapter stays here in Minnesota – to work locally on issues that you care about! Sustaining and tax-deductible options available.

Visit northstar.sierraclub.org/donate to give online, or contact us: 612-659-9124 or margaret.levin@sierraclub.org.
 Thank you for your generous support!

SIERRA CLUB
 NORTH STAR CHAPTER



Photo Credit: David Dyer-Bennet



Photo Credit: Jamie Rohlfling



Photo Credit: Danette Knickmeier



Photo Credit: Danette Knickmeier



Photo Credit: Laura Sosalla



Photo Credit: Jamie Rohlfling

SCENES FROM THE ST. PAUL SCIENCE MARCH

DANETTE KNICKMEIER

As a Sierra Club member and volunteer, choosing to attend the local version of the March for Science —co-sponsored by the North Star Chapter— was a no-brainer. The quality of all lives is affected by science every day and to ignore the facts that result from its research hurts everyone. So I marched in solidarity with my peers and took in the scenes around me.

I was elated to see the thousands of scientists and supporters of their work. These folks are known for hunkering down in their labs with their white coats and pocket protectors, but they wore both with pride out on the streets that day. Armed with chants like “What do we want? Evidence-based

science. When do we want it? After peer review.” and some very creative signs, this group proved they had something to say about the blatant disregard our current presidential administration has for the facts.

Young demonstrators gathered for a Kids Climate March at the start of the day, later merging with the March for Science and proceeding to the Capitol, with kids leading the way.

It wasn't just scientists of all ages that were marching, or even humans for that matter. I even witnessed several canines wearing signs proclaiming that science saved their lives. I was especially moved by a woman who literally parted the crowd

as she moved through it with her walker donning a sign that read “I'm 102. I know what science can do”.

We didn't change the world, but we came together for a common purpose in an effort to make change possible one day. And we left knowing we weren't alone in our thoughts and beliefs. Which, for me, is one small bright spot in these otherwise dark times.

Danette Knickmeier is a volunteer leader with the Communications Team.

A PROUD MEMBER OF



The Sierra Club Foundation benefits from workplace contributions to the Minnesota Environmental Fund, which provides a payroll giving option to support 19 member organizations that protect, conserve and restore Minnesota's environment. To learn more about adding this giving option at your workplace, please contact Margaret Levin at 612-659-9124 or margaret.levin@sierraclub.org.



Rochester - Photo Credit Dr Ashok Patel

MINNESOTANS ACROSS THE STATE MARCH FOR CLIMATE, JOBS AND JUSTICE

KAY SLAMA,
ERIK HATLESTAD AND
LINDA HERRON

In late April, the Peoples Climate March brought over 200,000 people to Washington, D.C. Tens of thousands more participated at sister marches around the country, including across Minnesota, to push back on the Trump administration's policies and stand up for climate, jobs and justice.

Rochester

Rochester showed up in force for the environment and for science over the week leading up to Earth Day. A grassroots group led by Sierra Club volunteers hosted 13 events over 7 days throughout the city for Earth Fest. The week culminated



Rochester - Photo Credit Kelli Lytle

in a combined People's Climate March/March for Science. Over 1,000 Rochesterites marched to a beat provided by the Rochester Community Technical College's World Drummers and listened to rally speakers from local racial justice organizations, a former House representative, and scientists from Mayo Clinic. April was a thrilling month for us in Rochester, MN! We are looking to build on the month's momentum by securing Rochester's first community solar investment as well as a city wide energy efficiency standard in the coming months. All the while our movement for equity and the environment grows!

Duluth

Nearly 700 people joined the Duluth People's Climate March from Leif Erikson Park, along the Lakewalk to Lake Place Park on April 29. Local organizers from the Sierra Club Clean Energy Team and Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light invited local environmental and social organizations among them



Duluth - Photo Credit Tom Thompson

AICHO, Citizens Climate Lobby, Conservation Minnesota, Ecolibrium3, Izaak Walton League McCabe Chapter, League of Women Voters, MPIRG, Save the Boundary Waters, Vets for Peace, Duluth for Clean Water, RREAL and others. Jeremy Wilson's Native American drum group opened the event. Speakers included state legislators Erik Simonson, Jennifer Schultz and Liz Olson. Also speaking were several Duluth City Councilors. At Lake Place Park there was an open mike opportunity and tables from many of the participating organizations to give marchers opportunities to get involved.

Minneapolis

Around 2000 people marched from the Federal Courthouse in downtown Minneapolis across the Stone Arch bridge to Father Hennepin Bluff Park. The event began with speakers talking about the intersections of environmental, racial, economic and social justice. Speakers included Muhammad Jiwa from Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light, Jigme Ugen from SEIU healthcare, Zoe Redfern-Hall from Youth Environmental Activists MN and Jamez Staples from Renewable Energy Partners, a solar installation company providing training programs for communities of color. Sierra Club's Karen Monahan welcomed the crowd and read a statement from American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa, making the connection between climate change and climate disruption contributing to drought and famine in the horn of Africa. Marchers stopped in front of Wells Fargo Tower & US Bank to hear from former bank employees about divestment and local attempts to organize bank workers. We then marched across the Stone Arch Bridge to Father Hennepin Park for a closing and opportunities to take action

with several organizations represented. The event would not have been possible without the leadership of Minnesotans for a Fair Economy, a coalition of economic and racial justice organizations and its leadership school, which provided volunteers and equipment for the march.

New London

On People's Climate Day April 29, New London MN capitalized on its lakes and the Crow River to hold a rally in solidarity with hundreds of other actions taking place around the country. Erik Hatlestad of CURE, Kay Slama of the North Star Sierra Club Chapter, Kathy Hartley of Indivisible Kandiyohi County, Deb Mortenson, Jeff Vetch, and Bethany Locktarin organized the event. Vetch led the crowd in singing "This Land is your Land" before New London City Council member Erik Hatlestad welcomed all the people who canoed, biked, and walked to the Mill Pond Beach.

Speakers included Sibley State Park Naturalist Kelsey Olson, UM-Morris MPIRG member Sam Guida, local poet Verna



New London - Photo Credit Kay Slama

Patrick, and Kay Slama with a denominational prayer. Many participants spoke about their passion for the environment before Hatlestad's closing call to action. The film "Minnesota Stories in a Changing Climate" followed the rally.

Kay Slama, Erik Hatlestad and Linda Herron are volunteer leaders with the Legislative Committee, Political Committee and Duluth Clean Energy Team, respectively.

FOREST MONITORS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

FRED HEFTY

Photo Credit Michael Shoop

If you like walking in the woods, consider becoming a forest monitor. The North Star Chapter Forests and Wildlands Committee is building a network of volunteers across the state to help adopt and monitor the health of state forests in their area. We currently have several volunteer forest monitors actively monitoring and collecting data.

Minnesota's 58 State Forests each have their own challenges, assets, landscapes, animals, plants, and recreational activities. We are looking for Sierra Club members to help make sure these special places are protected by training to become forest monitors, and then visiting a State Forest and collecting data several times a year.

To sign up or for more information, contact Fred Hefty at fred.hefty@northstar.sierraclub.org or 612-987-4768.

Fred Hefty is Chair of the Forests and Wildlands Committee.



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GET OUTDOORS



Inspiring Connections Outdoors - Photo Greg Springer

Photo Credit: Greg Springer

Local Outings

The Sierra Club Club's mission to explore, enjoy and protect the planet reminds us that conservation comes from a personal relationship with nature. Our volunteer-led Outings Program gets people of all ages outdoors on local educational outings. For updates, check out our schedule at www.meetup.com/MN-Sierra-Club-Outings or search for the MN Sierra Club Outings page. For more information on our schedule or to find out how you can become an Outings Leader, contact Chair Greg Allison at greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org

Saturday, July 8th

Hike, 5+ miles

William O'Brien State Park

Only an hour from the Twin Cities, William O'Brien State Park is a beautiful escape on the banks of the St. Croix River. Twelve miles of hiking and ski trails offer visitors a chance for quiet exploration of the park's rolling, wooded hills and a diversity of sights and sounds year-round. Leader: Greg Allison, greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org

Saturday, August 19th

Hike 6-8 Miles

Afton State Park

Grand oaks grace the rugged, rolling landscape of Afton State Park. Trails traverse through remnant and restored prairies, allowing you to wind down deep ravines and rise up to the grassy ridge tops and bluffs overlooking the scenic St. Croix River. The park includes 20 miles of hiking trails. Leader: Greg Allison, greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org

Sunday, September 17th

Multi-Sport: Bike 16+ miles & Hike 2+ miles

Luce Line State Trail and Wood Rill SNA

Bike a portion of the Luce Line in the west metro with a stop at Wood Rill Scientific and Natural Area (SNA) for a short hike. Wood-Rill SNA preserves a beautiful and sizeable remnant of the Big Woods, the vast ecosystem that once covered 2,000 square miles of Minnesota. Walking trails meander through its maple-basswood forest, over the steep hills of the St. Croix moraine, and down around a variety of wetlands. Undisturbed old-growth forest here varies from 120 to 400 years old. Leader: Greg Allison, greg.allison@northstar.sierraclub.org

Older, Wiser, Livelier Sierrans (OWLS)

Older, Wiser, Livelier Sierrans (OWLS) is an informal and friendly group of retirees who were active members of the Sierra Club during their youth, or have joined in their retirement. Though currently residing in Minnesota, members hail from all over the United States. OWLS was founded years ago by Sierrans Ida and Jack Davies.

OWLS gatherings occur on the third Tuesday of the month during the late morning and early afternoon. The planned activity always includes lunch or snacks.

Members of the group rotate responsibilities for planning the monthly gatherings. These gatherings offer opportunities for members to learn something new about the world in which they live, as well as some sort of physical activity to enhance their well-being. Gatherings have included hiking; canoeing; kayaking; seasonal visits to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum; tours showing the wonders of the many museums in the Twin Cities; look at the food preparation for the animals at the Minnesota Zoo; and gathering, cooking, and eating wild plants.

Upcoming activities include harvesting wild Minnesota mushrooms with a certified member of the Mycological Society in September, and touring the magnificently refurbished Minnesota State Capitol building in October.

There is a small annual mailing fee for each member. Some outings require participants to pay an admittance fee or other cost. Transportation is not provided, but carpooling with other members may be possible.

Contact Diane Garetz for further information at diane.garetz@northstar.sierraclub.org.

Inspiring Connections Outdoors

Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) is a volunteer-led North Star Chapter program that helps get young people outdoors, who may not otherwise have the opportunity to do so. ICO promotes social, physical, and mental health, builds the next generation of conservation leaders and outdoor enthusiasts, and supports community leadership. All ICO outings contain environmental education as a primary focus and are designed to spark the curiosity of youth participants.

To learn more, visit us at www.sierraclub.org/minnesota/inspiring-connections-outdoors. To get involved, contact us via email at mnico@northstar.sierraclub.org.

NATURAL GAS IS A BRIDGE TO NOWHERE

BRUCE GOFF

Natural Gas has been described as a bridge fuel. I prefer to think about it as a cul-de-sac fuel...it may lead somewhere, but it is ultimately a dead end. Unfortunately, regulators and producers across the state are still investing in natural gas over greener alternatives, as we recently saw in Becker, Minnesota, with the legislature approving Xcel Energy's decision to replace the Sherco coal plant with a new natural gas facility. Sierrans should be highly skeptical of choices like this, not only because of the environmental hazards of natural gas production, but also because of the large economic investment being put into these infrastructure projects, time and resources that would be better spent on developing sustainable energy options for our state.

Let us be clear about the environmental impact of natural gas production. Apologists for natural gas will point out that it produces less CO₂ than other fossil fuels, but this is misleading. While natural gas produces less CO₂, it releases significantly more methane than traditional fuels. As discussed in the Fall 2016 issue of the North Star Journal, greenhouse effects from methane could accelerate global warming in the coming decades. Furthermore, most extraction of natural gas comes through shale fracking, which

causes pollution of groundwater, landscape degradation, and increases in earthquakes.

Despite these risks, there is an outdated line of thought that natural gas is a necessary "bridge" between fossil-fuel energy sources and renewable energy. In reality, the future where wind and solar can provide the same stability to the grid as natural gas has already arrived. One recent study by the largest grid operator in the U.S. found that wind (and projected increases in solar) can be added reliably to the grid; some cases, wind is even more reliable in extreme weather than traditional energy sources.

This being the case, we should minimize our sunk costs in fossil fuel technology and infrastructure. For example, while the decision to build a natural gas facility in Becker does help in some local environmental impacts and local employment issues, this choice is likely more costly long-term. Costs to build this facility may be initially lower than greener options, but upfront costs do not take into account the eventual costs to decommission natural gas facilities and replace them with renewable options, or the costs of natural gas production on our water, soil, and atmosphere. And as evidence mounts on the dangers of fracking, there is a possibility that the entire

natural gas supply chain could be abandoned as citizens (through election or courts of law) demand safer and cleaner energy sources.

Instead of investing in natural gas, we need to look at alternatives - making better use of existing resources, adopting more efficient technology, and using tax incentives to accelerate the adoption of renewable energy sources. Together, these policies will provide a more stable grid, reduce the chance for stranded assets, and help propel us to the renewable energy infrastructure desired by the majority of Minnesotans.

So: talk to your neighbors, your energy provider, and your elected representatives. Tell them we cannot afford to build bridges to nowhere. Natural gas is no longer a solution to either our environmental or our economic needs.

Bruce Goff is a volunteer leader with the Clean Air and Renewable Energy Committee.

MONTHLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Please see sierraclub.org/minnesota or call the office at 612-659-9124 for more information. It is strongly recommended that you confirm meeting dates, times and location as changes may occur.

Most meetings are held at the Chapter Office at 2327 East Franklin Ave, Minneapolis, with greater Minnesota members invited to participate by phone. If a regularly scheduled meeting falls on a holiday, please contact us for rescheduling information.

Refer to contact list on page 15 for more information.

Beyond Oil and Tar Sands: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

Clean Air and Energy Committee: 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

Executive Committee: 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Forests and Wildlands Committee: 2nd Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m.

Land Use and Transportation: 1st Monday of the month, 6:00 p.m.

Mining Committee: 3rd Monday of the month, 7:00 p.m. - Meets by phone, contact Chair.

Wetlands and Water Committee: 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.



SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER

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For the schedule of committee meetings and other volunteer opportunities, please check the North Star Chapter calendar at sierraclub.org/minnesota or call the office at 612-659-9124

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Executive Committee (ExCom) is the governing committee of the Sierra Club North Star Chapter. The ExCom has overall responsibility for strategic planning and budgeting. It also establishes and oversees the subcommittees that plan and implement the conservation campaigns, electoral efforts, communications, and outdoor activities of the Sierra Club in Minnesota; and hires and oversees the State Director.

ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS FOR TERMS BEGINNING 2018

The ExCom is made up of fifteen at-large elected Sierra Club members in Minnesota. Any current member is eligible to run. Members are elected for a rotating three-year term, and those elected at the end of this year will begin their terms in January 2018. The Nominations Committee invites you to submit names for consideration for ExCom election. Members who are not nominated by the Nominations Committee can petition for candidacy with the signature of 25 members if submitted by the petition deadline.

ELECTION TIMELINE:

- July 15, 2017 – Deadline to submit names to Nominating Committee for consideration
- August 15, 2017 – Nominating Committee reports nominees to Executive Committee
- August 31, 2017 – Deadline to submit petitions to the Secretary
- October 17, 2017 – Appointment of Elections Committee to count ballots
- November 1, 2017 – Week of ballot mailing
- January 5, 2018 – Closing date of election

If you are interested in running for the ExCom or for more information, please contact Nominations Chair Siri Simons at siri.simons@northstar.sierraclub.org or the Chapter office at 612-659-9124.

LIST OF CURRENT AT-LARGE EXCOM MEMBERS

NAME	RESIDENCE	END OF TERM
Sammie Ardito Rivera	Minneapolis	2019
Louis Alemayehu	Minneapolis	2018
Marty Cobenais	Bagley	2018
C. Scott Cooper	St. Paul	2017
Luther Dale	Shoreview	2019
John Doberstein	Duluth	2017
Katie Eukel	Minneapolis	2018
Kirsten Johnson	Minneapolis	2017
Javier Morillo-Alicea	St. Paul	2019
Lois Norrgard	Bloomington	2019
Siri Simons	Minneapolis	2018
Tom Thompson	Duluth	2019
Sarah Wovcha	St. Paul	2018

See photos and bios online at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/minnesota/executive-committee>



SIERRA CLUB
NORTH STAR CHAPTER

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