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To

The undersigned cities are writing to support HFxxx/SFxxx that would advance and accelerate commercial building energy standards such that the State of Minnesota is better positioned to meet its statutory greenhouse gas reduction goal of 80% by 2050. Better building energy standards will reduce barriers to cities striving to meet local climate and energy goals. Together, our coalition of cities represents more than 1.1 million Minnesotans and contain more than 231 million square feet of commercial building space.

Buildings consume large amounts of energy and are a leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. In 2017, Minnesota's building sector made up 40.6% of the total energy consumed in the state, 19.5% of which was from within the commercial buildings sector, including high-rise multifamily buildings.

We know that building efficiency is one of the most impactful and cost-effective ways state and local governments can improve the comfort and health of people, reduce costs for building owners, and make progress toward climate goals. However, in most cases, state law prohibits municipalities from deviating from the state energy code. Cities are therefore unable to realize the full benefits of advanced building energy design and construction, resulting in buildings throughout Minnesota that consume more energy, are costlier to operate, and emit more greenhouse gas emissions than necessary now and into the future.

In December 2020, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Commerce (the departments) released a report titled [Improving building energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family construction](#).

With input from experts and stakeholders, the report recommends instituting a framework for the statewide commercial building energy code that ensures that all new commercial and large multifamily construction is net-zero by 2036. The undersigned cities support this recommendation.

The negative impacts of climate change are already being felt in Minnesota and disproportionately affect vulnerable households and overburdened communities. The combustion of fossil fuels used to generate electricity and heat for our buildings not only exacerbates these impacts, but also results in increased outdoor and indoor air pollution that further compromises respiratory health. Any continued delay to updating the energy standards sets emissions targets back for the decades-long life of the buildings.

The cities that have signed this letter support legislation that would drive for better building construction through advanced and accelerated standards.