



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-038, **Version:** 1

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**EQC Meeting Date:** January 20, 2021

**To:** Members of the Environmental Quality Commission

**From:** Beth Kallestad, Program Coordinator

State level climate action items to support

**Action Requested:**

The EQC will discuss two state level climate action items to recommend to City Council for support.

**Summary Report:**

The City of Northfield's Climate Action Plan includes action item

*PP 7.4 - Engage decision-makers, including local members of boards and commissions, county officials, as well as state and national representatives, around elements of the climate action plan.*

The EQC is asked to consider recommending support to City Council for the two items below.

**1. Comment Letter on Xcel Energy Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)**

A coalition of Minnesota Cities and clean energy advocacy organizations have drafted a comment letter they are asking Northfield and other cities to support with regard to Xcel Energy's 2020-2034 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The plan outlines the utility's resource needs over that 15 year period, and charts a path for achieving its carbon goals of 80% reduction by 2030 and 100% carbon-free by 2050 with proposed plan retirements and new resource additions. A coalition summary document is provided with this packet for more information. The comment letter is also attached for review.

The Northfield EQC received a presentation on this IRP plan and request for comment at its December 16, 2020 meeting. The City Council received a presentation on January 12, 2021.

The EQC is asked to adopt a motion recommending that the Northfield City Council adopt a resolution supporting this coalition letter and become a signer of the letter.

**2. Support for upcoming state legislative action on Building Code**

Building energy uses, especially commercial buildings, is a major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in Northfield and other cities in Minnesota. In Minnesota, Cities are not allowed to pass ordinance regulating buildings that are more restrictive than the state building energy code.

On February 4, 2020, the Northfield City Council adopted a resolution supporting state legislative action which would allow municipalities to enact more restrictive codes if they so chose. This legislation was not adopted by the 2020 legislature.

In December 2020, the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Commerce released a report titled [Improving building energy efficiency in commercial and multi-family construction](http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BuildingsEnergyEfficiency2020.pdf) [<http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BuildingsEnergyEfficiency2020.pdf>](http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BuildingsEnergyEfficiency2020.pdf). 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. As the 2021 legislative session gets underway, cities are being asked to support this soon-to-be drafted legislation by signing on to a letter of support. A draft letter and a fact sheet explaining more about the benefits are attached. The city coalition creating this letter is asking for responses no later than February 11, 2021. A final version of the legislation language will be provide to Northfield when it is drafted.

The EQC is asked to adopt a motion recommending that the Northfield City Council adopt a resolution supporting this coalition letter to the State legislature regarding enhancements to the Building Energy Code and become a signer of the letter.

**Alternative Options:**

NA

**Financial Impacts:**

NA

**Tentative Timelines:**

Xcel IRP comment letter - resolution of support - City Council - February 2, 2021

Building Code letter - resolution of support - City Council - February 2, 2021