



# CONVERSATIONS AND IDEAS LEAD TO BOLD ACTION

Whether you are a farmer in Nobles County, a line worker at a manufacturing facility in Brainerd, or a resident in St. Paul's North End, you'll experience the devastating effects of climate change, though differently. If we don't take action, then how we work, live, and recreate will change forever and future generations will not experience all that makes Minnesota unique.



### **Now is the time to accelerate action.**

Governor Tim Walz directed state agencies in 2019 to act with urgency to build community resilience and engage Minnesotans to find solutions that create economic opportunities, foster greater innovation and partnerships, and promote fair and equitable benefits for all Minnesotans. The Walz-Flanagan Administration has proposed ideas promoting clean energy, resilient communities, and win-win solutions for our forests and farms, but more is needed.



### **We must lead with our values for a carbon-neutral, more resilient, and more equitable Minnesota.**

Our climate change work will follow the scientific evidence, confront challenges head on, and ensure everyone can benefit from solutions. State leaders developed this commonsense vision that prioritizes bold action, new ideas, and ensuring that new voices – including tribal nations and communities disproportionately impacted by climate change – are heard and that everyone realizes the economic and environmental benefits of climate action.



### **Solutions happen when we work together.**

Every Minnesotan has a role in addressing climate change and identifying solutions. Government cannot do it alone. By working collaboratively, we will build resilient communities, protect natural spaces, reduce risks to our farms and businesses, and create a homegrown clean economy with good-paying jobs that position Minnesotans for both long-term economic success and healthy lives.



### **Conversations and ideas lead to action.**

Throughout 2021, state agencies will engage in conversations with people across the state and encourage Minnesotans to propose new solutions and ideas that address the climate crisis. Share your ideas on the Our Minnesota Climate website ([www.climate.state.mn.us](http://www.climate.state.mn.us)) or comment on other people's suggestions for government, individuals, or industries. In early 2022, Minnesotans' proposed ideas and solutions will be turned into a meaningful platform for climate action for Minnesota.



## Investing in clean transportation

The transportation sector is the largest source of greenhouse gases in Minnesota. State agencies are working to reduce greenhouse gases from transportation. Minnesota launched the Midwest's first electric school bus pilot project and is developing more than 2,500 miles of electric vehicle (EV) charging corridors throughout the state. The implementation of clean car standards will give consumers more options, support new economic growth, and help improve our climate.

Governor Walz has also recommended smart investments in Minnesota biofuels to reduce emissions and create opportunities for farmers and Greater Minnesota communities. This includes helping service stations install new equipment to use higher blends of biofuels.

Tackling greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector requires new investments in cleaner fuels, more efficient vehicles, and public transit, walking, and biking so that all Minnesotans have access to safe, clean, affordable, and convenient modes of transportation no matter where they live.

### Possible goals



**Increase the number of electric cars** and light trucks on Minnesota roads to 20% by 2030



**Reduce vehicle miles traveled** by increasing biking, walking, transit, and use of broadband for telework or other needs (The Minnesota Department of Transportation will adopt a specific goal in early 2022.)

### Possible strategies

- ▶ Increase the use of cleaner fuels, including biofuels
- ▶ Create an EV rebate program similar to other states
- ▶ Partner with businesses to electrify fleets
- ▶ Increase transit service along high-demand corridors and in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution
- ▶ Fund better pedestrian and bicycle networks
- ▶ Support statewide broadband infrastructure to promote telework, telehealth, and distance learning
- ▶ Promote land use planning that makes it easier to travel less by car



## Implementing strategies for our natural and working lands

Minnesota's varied landscapes – croplands, pastures, forests, prairies, wetlands, and our more than 10,000 lakes – are part of our identity. They are also an essential part of our climate solution.

An acre of grassland can hold as much as 78 tons of carbon while an acre of mature evergreen forest can hold as much as 140 tons of carbon. And suburban trees, gardens and lawns can also provide climate mitigation and resiliency benefits. In 2021, the Walz-Flanagan Administration secured valuable funding for incentivizing planting 12 million tree seedlings on public and private lands by 2025. The legislature also provided funds to add 20,000 acres of cover crops that will improve soil health.

### Possible goals



**Increase the amount of carbon sequestered** in natural and working lands by 25% through restoration, enhancement, and deploying carbon smart practices



**Enhance biological diversity and protect habitat** corridors on 350,000 acres of natural and working lands to help those systems adapt to the changing climate

### Possible strategies

- ▶ Grow participation in the Climate Smart Farms endorsement in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program
- ▶ Plant more trees and tree species that reflect our changing climate
- ▶ Restore prairies and wetlands to maximize carbon storage and enhance habitat
- ▶ Improve long-term climate resiliency with increased incentives for farmers to improve fertilizer management, soil health, and water quality
- ▶ Use cover crops and other carbon-smart practices on cropland and pastureland
- ▶ Promote conversion of marginal farmland to woodland, perennial crops, or forage crops
- ▶ Expand sustainable forest harvest practices
- ▶ Promote and support urban agriculture
- ▶ Advance research on climate mitigation and adaptation from natural and working lands



## Creating stronger, resilient communities

Minnesota's climate is changing rapidly and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Extreme rain events are more intense and more frequent than at any time on record, with devastating effects for homes, businesses, and local communities. Minnesota now ranks second in the country for extreme weather events, only behind California, resulting in Minnesotans seeing a 366% increase in homeowner insurance rates since 1998.

Adapting to climate change requires a community-by-community approach. That is why the Walz-Flanagan Administration proposed, and the legislature approved, funding to help local and tribal governments assess the risks of increased flooding and develop plans to enhance stormwater infrastructure. More is needed to ensure communities are prepared to respond to extreme weather and become more resilient to future climate conditions.

### Possible goals



**One third of Minnesota's local governments have completed planning** specifically to address climate vulnerability and build resilience by 2030



**State funding for resilience planning and project implementation** has increased by 25%



**Climate risks and resiliency provisions** are included in 80% of county hazard mitigation plans by 2025

### Possible strategies

- ▶ Promote green infrastructure to hold water after large rain events, support ecosystems, and inventory multi-purpose water storage opportunities
- ▶ Seek federal funding and provide resources to help communities and individuals plan for and adapt to climate impacts including consideration of insurance
- ▶ Support flood preparedness and business disruption assistance for small businesses disproportionately impacted by climate change
- ▶ Increase urban forests, prioritize low canopy areas, and manage emerald ash borer to sustain tree cover
- ▶ Expand the GreenStep Program to share resilience best practices and adaptation tools
- ▶ Include resiliency provisions in state and local building codes, permits, and policies, including measures to reduce the urban heat island effect



## Transitioning to clean energy and more efficient buildings

Minnesota's electricity generation is getting cleaner: 55% came from carbon-free resources in 2020. Our electric power sector has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% over the past 10 years. Minnesota is ranked #9 on energy efficiency out of 50 states by American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

But some sectors are experiencing a rise in greenhouse base emissions. Since 2005, greenhouse gas emissions in the commercial building sector have increased by 15%, partly driven by greater heating and cooling demands caused by our changing climate.

In May 2021, with bipartisan support, Governor Walz signed into law the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act. The ECO Act will reduce greenhouse gases by approximately two million tons per year, while saving Minnesotans millions of dollars in energy costs. Investments in energy efficiency and conservation not only help address climate change, but also create jobs in small and large companies across the state.

### Existing goals



**Establish a standard to achieve 100% carbon-free** electricity generation by 2040



**Increase the renewable energy standard** to achieve 55% by 2050



**Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing buildings** by 50% by 2035



**Improve codes and standards** for all new commercial and large multi-family buildings to achieve net-zero by 2036

### Possible strategies

- ▶ Explore policies that expand the amount of clean thermal (or heating) energy over time, allowing the transition to be accomplished with reasonable costs
- ▶ Fund research and development to help achieve building efficiency and renewable energy goals
- ▶ Lower operating costs by expanding combined heat and power systems and energy efficiency measures in wastewater and water treatment plants
- ▶ Explore market-based solutions to lower greenhouse gas emissions
- ▶ Explore increasing the use of sustainably-harvested wood and hemp products in building construction
- ▶ Boost opportunities for homes and businesses to reduce their energy use and improve health through better air quality



## Promoting health, equity, and economic opportunity

Climate change is bad for our health. From higher temperatures and extreme weather events to poorer air quality and tickborne disease threats, changes in Minnesota's climate threaten the health of our communities. While all Minnesotans are affected by climate change, not everyone contributes to nor experiences impacts equally.

We must develop solutions that benefit everyone – especially residents who have existing health conditions and are disproportionately impacted by climate change. This often includes low-income and Black, Indigenous, and communities of color.

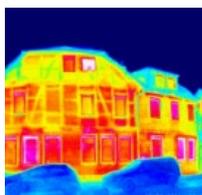
Well-developed policies and strategies promote health, create jobs, and improve communities. Job growth in the clean energy sector is outpacing job growth in the overall economy: From farming to manufacturing to construction, businesses become stronger by taking innovative climate action such as transitioning to clean energy.

Acting with urgency will protect the health of Minnesotans and ensure our communities thrive in years to come.

### Possible goals



**Grow clean economy jobs** throughout the state and expand economic opportunities for communities disproportionately impacted by climate change



**Ensure access to clean energy and energy efficiency programs** in communities disproportionately impacted by climate change



**Reduce health inequities** from climate change

### Possible strategies

- ▶ Train Minnesotans for clean economy jobs
- ▶ Complete a green jobs workforce development plan for the state
- ▶ Promote tree planting, community gardening, and green space in communities at greater risk from climate impacts
- ▶ Use equity analysis tools in policy and program development
- ▶ Provide clean energy solutions to low-income communities at no/reduced cost
- ▶ Train and support community centers to serve residents dealing with extreme heat, flooding, air quality safety, and power loss.