

# Minnesota Looks to Build on Clean Energy Progress, Create Jobs

July 17, 2014

Clean energy experts from across the state and nation are gathering today in Minneapolis to discuss strategies to strengthen Minnesota's clean energy economy and align the state's economic development policies with growth opportunities in the clean energy industry. Today's Minnesota Clean Energy Economy Summit is part of a National Governors Association (NGA) initiative exploring policy initiatives to build on Minnesota's leading clean energy reforms, while growing the state's economy and creating jobs.

**“Real progress has been made in the last decade. Today renewables account for 20 percent of our state's electricity generation, compared with 5.8 percent in 2000. And in just the last four years, wind energy production in Minnesota has increased by 38 percent.”** said Governor Mark Dayton. **“So we have made important progress, but we still have a long way to go; and I hope this summit will help our state continue moving in the right direction.”**

The overarching goals of today's Summit are:

- Exploring Strategies to Create Clean Energy Jobs – Exploring strategies to grow jobs, build on Minnesota's economic competitiveness, and protect the quality of Minnesota's natural resources and environment.
- Collaborating Across Sectors – Engaging business owners, industry leaders, and policymakers across the clean energy and economic development community.
- Working Together Toward Shared Goals – Hearing directly from clean energy industries in the public, private and non-profit sectors so that Minnesota's strategies moving forward have the broad support needed to achieve our shared objectives.

**“Summit participants will identify key challenges and emerging opportunities to growing a diverse clean energy economy,”** said Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben. **“We anticipate broad input from the clean energy industry and support for Minnesota's position as a job-generating leader in wind energy and green industries.”**

## **Minnesota's Nation-Leading Clean Energy Policies Are Working**

Governor Dayton provided opening remarks at today's Summit, [noting progress Minnesota has made in growing our state's clean energy economy](#), and

challenging policymakers and stakeholders to build on those efforts into the future. Some of Minnesota's most notable clean energy accomplishments have included:

**Less Coal** – Over the last decade, Minnesota's use of coal has been reduced by 33%.

**More Clean Energy** – Today, renewable sources of energy account for 20% of the state's annual electricity generation, up from just 5.8% in 2000.

**More Wind Energy** – Since 2010, Minnesota has increased its use of wind power by 38%, adding 843 megawatts of electricity. Minnesota ranks second in the nation for the percentage of electricity produced from wind (14.3%), providing enough electricity to power 885,000 residential homes and reducing annual carbon emissions by 5.1 million metric tons (the equivalent of removing 975,000 cars from the road).

**More Solar Energy** – In 2013, Governor Dayton and the Legislature enacted a new solar energy standard, requiring utilities to produce 1.5% of their electricity from solar power by 2020. New installations in 2012 alone nearly tripled the state's solar capacity to a total 14,000 kilowatts, providing enough electricity to power 2,300 residential homes with clean, renewable energy.

**More Biofuels** – This year Minnesota implemented the nation's first 10% biodiesel mandate requiring diesel fuel to contain 10% biodiesel in each gallon sold. The new B10 standard will help reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions and displace an additional 16.5 million gallons of fossil fuel with clean, renewable biodiesel annually.

**Better Conservation Efforts** – Minnesota's Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) requires utilities to reduce energy usage 1.5% per year through efficiency efforts. These efforts have saved enough energy to prevent the construction of at least 10 new coal plants in our state. In fact, CIP has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2 million metric tons – the equivalent of removing nearly 382,000 cars from the road.

**Better Home Energy Efficiency Efforts** – Minnesota's efforts to weatherize residential homes have paid off. Over the last five years, the state has helped weatherize more than 25,000 homes, saving over 750 billion BTUs of energy – the equivalent of taking over 8,000 cars off the road for a year.

**Low Prices for Consumers** – As Minnesota continues building our clean energy economy, our residential electricity rates have remained below the national average. In April 2014, residential rates averaged \$11.97 per kilowatt hour, 3% below the national average of \$12.31.

**Clean Energy Jobs** – Tens of thousands of Minnesotans are employed in the clean energy sector. Wind energy alone supports up to 3,000 jobs in Minnesota and the production of cleaner-burning fuels like ethanol support an estimated 12,600 Minnesota jobs.

**Building on the Strengths of Minnesota’s Clean Energy Economy**

Throughout the remainder of today’s Summit, members of the Governor’s Cabinet, national clean energy experts, and other stakeholders will discuss the opportunities and challenges of growing a diverse clean energy economy in Minnesota. Today’s conversations at the Summit are based on the work of Minnesota state agencies participating in the NGA Policy Academy on Clean Energy and Economic Development. Minnesota was one of four states to be selected to participate in the NGA Policy Academy.