

A framework for action



In September 2022, Minnesota's Subcabinet on Climate Change launched the Climate Action Framework, our state's plan to reduce climate pollution and prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change. The framework identifies near-term actions we must take to achieve our long-term goal of a carbon-neutral, resilient, and equitable future for Minnesota.

The framework is organized around six goals for climate action: clean transportation, climate-smart natural and working lands, resilient communities, clean energy and efficient buildings, healthy lives and communities, and a clean economy. To develop the framework, over 3,000 Minnesotans shared their perspective on how Minnesota should address climate change. The state also incorporated feedback from Tribal nations and leaders from local governments, nonprofits, and businesses in every sector of our economy.

The framework also introduced new climate action targets for Minnesota adopted by the Legislature: reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030, achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and prioritize investment in climate resilience over the next 10 years. The actions included in the framework lay the foundation to meet these targets, but will not get Minnesota all the way there. To achieve these goals, we will need the efforts of federal, Tribal, state, and local governments, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals all working together to rapidly cut climate pollution, prepare for climate impacts, and improve the ability of Minnesota landscapes to absorb and store more carbon.

Minnesota's climate action targets



Reduce GHGs 50% by 2030



Net-zero emissions by 2050



Prioritize resilience investment over the next 10 years

IN THIS PROGRESS REPORT

This report includes a basic overview of the Climate Action Framework goals and highlights initiatives that have made progress on these goals since the framework was launched in September of 2022. The state tracks progress on greenhouse gas emissions reductions through the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, which catalogs Minnesota's sources of climate pollution and sequestration progress. The next greenhouse gas inventory will be released in January 2025.

Our home is changing

Since Minnesota launched the Climate Action Framework in 2022, the impacts of climate change have hit close to home.

The winter of 2023-2024 was the warmest on record, with temperatures averaging 13.5°F above normal. Most areas in the state received less than 50% of their normal snowfall. These conditions had a significant negative impact on Minnesota's winter recreation economy, leading many small businesses to seek support in emergency loans from the federal Small Business Administration.

Minnesotans can expect to see more warm winters. In fact, our winters are warming faster than nearly any other state in the contiguous United States. Minnesota's average winter temperature has warmed 5° since 1970 and our lakes have lost an average of 10 to 14 days of ice cover in the past 50 years.

Minnesota's summers are anticipated to get hotter and more humid in the years ahead. This can be especially dangerous for outdoor workers, athletes, pregnant people, kids, and older Minnesotans. Wildfires are becoming larger and more frequent during the summer months, in part due to climate change. In 2023, Minnesota issued a record 21 air quality alerts because of wildfire smoke drifting into the state from far beyond our borders. These conditions make it difficult to enjoy the health and wellness benefits of time spent outdoors.

Each of these changes threaten the things we love most about our state. Our homes. Our lakes and rivers. Our cold weather traditions. And our vibrant seasons. Climate change also threatens the viability of walleye, wild rice, moose, and other plants and animals that are vital to the livelihoods of the Tribal Nations that share geography Minnesota.

To keep Minnesota a great place to raise a family, we must prepare for these changes, and continue to take urgent action to bring the Climate Action Framework to life and reduce pollution that causes climate change.



Minnesota takes a leap forward



We can build climate solutions that work for Minnesota.

In 2023, Minnesota had a historic legislative session for climate action.

The Legislature passed more than 40 initiatives to reduce climate pollution and prepare our communities for climate change. Many of these proposals were based on recommendations included in the Climate Action Framework. Together, these laws represent the most significant investments and policy improvements Minnesota has ever made on climate change. Once again, Minnesota has positioned itself as a national leader in climate solutions.

Momentum for climate action in Minnesota is being matched by the federal government.

Investments from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) have infused billions of dollars into projects across the country that are designed to modernize our power grid with clean energy, improve our roads and bridges with climate-smart design, plant more trees in communities and on public lands, improve soil health, and connect America through better transit and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Minnesota is already seeing the impact of these investments.

A \$62 million IRA “Solar for All” grant will help our state increase access to solar energy in low- and moderate-income communities. \$200 million from the EPA will help Minnesota cut climate pollution from our food systems. The Minnesota Department of Commerce and utilities across the state have also received \$614 million in funding to improve electrical transmission to invest in more renewable energy.

Goal 1

Clean transportation

The framework sets a vision for Minnesota connected through a safe, equitable, and sustainable transportation system that serves all people of our state.

The transportation sector, including pollution from cars, trucks, and other vehicles, is Minnesota's largest source of greenhouse gases, accounting for about one-quarter of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions. Minnesota must prioritize electric vehicle adoption, public transit infrastructure, innovation through clean fuels, and climate-smart planning to meet our goal of being carbon-neutral by 2050.

PROGRESS

\$1 billion + transit investment

A new .75-cent metro-area sales tax will create over \$440 million in dedicated funding each year for public transit projects. This investment will help us achieve our framework goal to decrease vehicle miles traveled 20% per capita by 2050.

EV rebates

Many Minnesotans have participated in a new program that provides a rebate of up to \$2,500 toward the purchase of a new electric vehicle and up to \$1,500 for an e-bike. Used EV purchasers may receive a rebate of up to \$600. These incentives will help us reach 20% EVs on Minnesota roads by 2030.

MnDOT's Carbon Reduction Program

Using funds from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the Minnesota Department of Transportation has invested nearly \$80 million over the last year in 50 carbon reduction and resilience projects like EV chargers in Greater Minnesota and new paths for walking and biking. Continued investments across the transportation sector will help us reduce climate pollution from the transportation sector 80% by 2040.



Goal 2

Climate smart natural and working lands



The framework accelerates Minnesota's efforts to manage our natural and working lands in a way that absorbs and stores carbon, reduces emissions, and sustains resilient landscapes.

Minnesota's agriculture sector is our second-largest source of climate pollution. Agricultural practices like cover cropping and no-till farming store carbon and offset a portion of the emissions produced by this sector. Well-managed forests, grasslands, wetlands, and peatlands also capture and store carbon, making them a significant sink for climate pollution in Minnesota. To meet our climate goals, Minnesota must further bolster protection and management of our natural lands and help farmers adopt climate-smart practices to reduce climate pollution from activities like growing crops and raising animals.

PROGRESS

Growing our forests, prairies, wetlands, and peatlands

In 2023, the legislature approved millions of dollars in new funding to advance the Department of Natural Resources' work to manage, restore, protect, and enhance our forests, grasslands, wetlands, and peatlands. All of these efforts help Minnesota reach our goal of increasing the amount of carbon absorbed and stored annually in natural and working lands by 25% by 2035.

Supporting healthy soils

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Board of Water and Soil Resources have invested over \$20 million since 2022 to help farmers adopt healthy soil practices including no-till farming, cover crops, and rotational grazing. These investments will help us reduce annual climate pollution in the working lands sector by 25% by 2035.

One million acres of certified farmland

In 2023, Minnesota surpassed 1 million acres of farmland enrolled in the state's Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program. Conservation practices implemented through the program cut climate pollution from Minnesota farms by more than 58,000 metric tons of CO₂e per year – the equivalent of taking about 13,750 cars off our roads.



Goal 3

Resilient communities



The framework calls for thorough planning and investment to ensure communities across Minnesota have the resources they need to prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Warmer winters. Fewer days of ice on our lakes. Poor air quality that keeps us inside in the summer. Storms with more rain. All Minnesotans are experiencing the impacts of climate change. In fact, 87% of local governments in our state have reported experiencing impacts on infrastructure because of new weather trends caused by climate change. Preparing for climate change today will protect the state we know and love for future generations of Minnesotans.

PROGRESS

Investing in resilient infrastructure

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is allocating \$100 million to upgrade aging infrastructure in communities across the state with climate-smart design to combat flooding and other climate impacts while creating local jobs. At least 40% of all grant awards have been directed towards benefiting environmental justice areas. More than 50 communities so far have received planning grants, a step toward our goal to have 100% of Minnesota communities engaged in climate resilience planning by 2030.

Launching the Gold Leaf Challenge

In February 2024, Minnesota launched the Gold Leaf Challenge creating pathways for communities to take local climate action. Using GreenStep program resources, this new program aims to challenge, assist, and recognize local efforts from a menu of 44 high-priority, high-impact climate actions from the Climate Action Framework.

Creating more shade with tree canopies

Tree canopies help to keep our communities cool as temperatures rise; however, tree pests and diseases enabled by climate change threaten our community forests. In 2023, Minnesota dedicated \$15 million to grow the DNR's ReLeaf program, which provides grants to plant more resilient shade trees in community spaces. We want to achieve 30% overall tree canopy cover in Minnesota communities by 2030 and 40% by 2050.

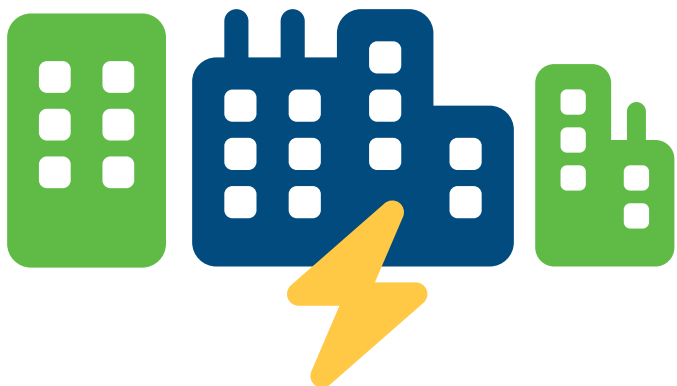


Goal 4

Clean energy and efficient buildings

Under the guidance of the framework, Minnesota will expand our use of carbon-free electricity and create healthy, comfortable buildings that are cheaper to operate and pollute less.

Our clean energy transition is a Minnesota success story. The amount of energy our state produces from renewable resources like solar power and wind has risen 60% over the past decade. Today, 54% of our energy comes from carbon-free sources like renewables, nuclear, and hydropower. The result? Greenhouse gas emissions from our power sector have dropped 40% over the last 10 years. We can build on this momentum as we work to power Minnesota with 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040.



PROGRESS

100% carbon-free electricity by 2040

In 2023, Minnesota became the 21st state to adopt a 100% carbon-free energy standard. By 2040, Minnesota will be fully powered by energy resources that do not produce climate pollution. This is a major step to lower our greenhouse gas emissions, combat the climate crisis, and create new clean energy jobs. The new law also ensures Minnesotans will continue to have reliable, affordable, and safe energy.

Better buildings

Buildings use approximately 40% of the total energy consumed in Minnesota. Of that, about 19% is consumed by commercial buildings. In 2023, Minnesota adopted a plan to update our statewide commercial building energy code to reduce energy use by 80% in new, large buildings by 2036. This was a priority action included in the Climate Action Framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector.

Matching federal investments for more impact

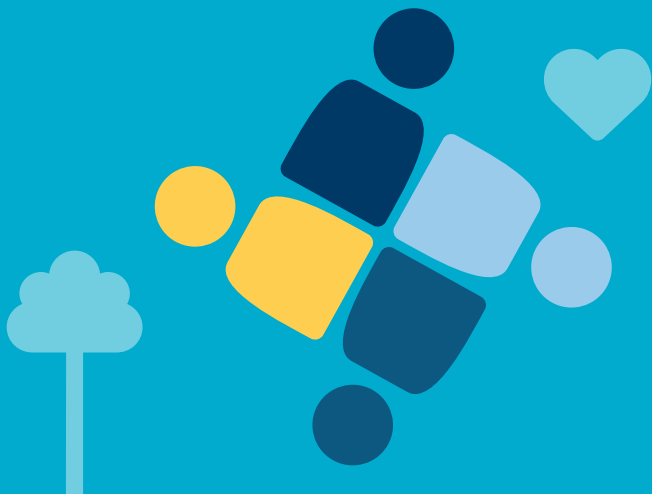
Minnesota's State Competitiveness Fund is a \$190 million program designed to unlock billions in federal funding available through the Infrastructure Act and Inflation Reduction Act. This funding provides state resources to match federal funds as well as technical assistance and grant-writing support for rural, Tribal, and disadvantaged communities. This will allow Minnesota to compete for billions of dollars to support investments in energy efficiency, clean energy, and low-carbon technologies.

Goal 5

Healthy lives and communities

By following recommendations included in the framework, we can protect the health and well-being of Minnesotans in the face of climate change.

Climate change has been called the greatest health challenge because it threatens the very basics we depend upon for life – safe and available drinking water, clean air, and a reliable food supply. While changes in our climate threaten the health of all Minnesotans, not everyone will experience these impacts equally. Existing inequities based on race, age, gender, geography, and economic status place some communities at greater risk. The framework focuses on the steps we can take to protect our health, especially those who live in the communities that are most affected.



PROGRESS

Improving public health resilience

Minnesota state government has prioritized activities to improve public health resilience including grants and technical assistance to local organizations to plan for the health impacts of extreme weather events as well as data analysis and reporting to implement, strengthen, evaluate, and track resiliency efforts in the face of climate change across the state.

Protecting our drinking water

Private well users – many of whom live in rural areas – face unique public health risks from climate change because they are responsible for making sure that their water is safe during floods, drought, and other extreme weather. The Minnesota Department of Health has improved support for private well users to help address the health risks of climate change, including updates to its flood response protocol and creating an online resource on drought and private wells.

Tracking health impacts

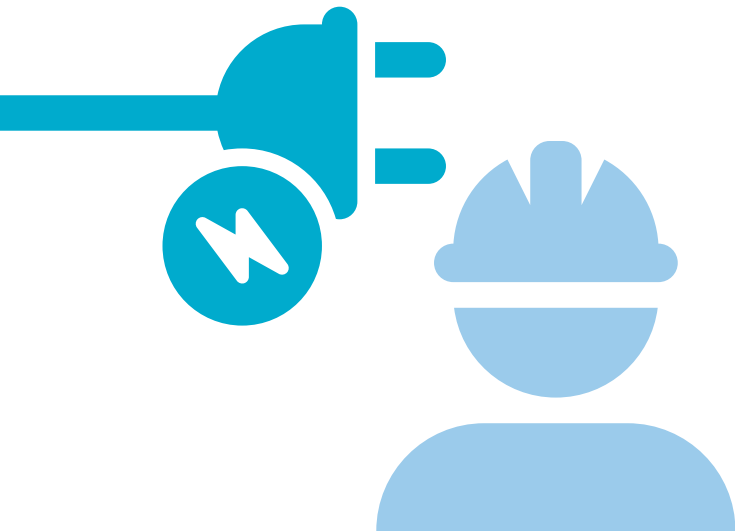
In partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Minnesota Department of Health has built a system to monitor near real-time hospital reporting of health conditions. Currently, 80% of Minnesota hospital facilities are reporting data. With this information, we can identify the populations most impacted by heat-related illnesses, respond quickly to community needs, and reduce risk.

Goal 6

Clean economy

The framework provides Minnesota a roadmap for a thriving, carbon-neutral economy that produces goods and services with environmental benefit and equitably creates family-sustaining job opportunities.

Today, nearly 60,000 Minnesotans work in the clean energy and energy efficiency sector. As consumers and businesses increasingly seek energy-efficient and lower-carbon products, Minnesota is well-positioned to grow our clean economy, but we must prepare our workforce with the skills to do the job. Minnesota is committed to supporting businesses and workers that are part of the clean economy with training, research, incentives, and partnerships.



PROGRESS

Clean economy apprenticeships

In 2024, Minnesota launched a new \$3 million program to grow apprenticeship opportunities for clean economy occupations. This funding will enable registered apprenticeship programs to purchase equipment and provide training to grow apprentice skills and train workers in clean technologies.

Support for transition communities

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is facilitating a \$5 million grant program to help communities with fossil fuel power plants craft and deploy economic growth strategies after the facilities close.

Minnesota Energy Alley

In partnership with local economic development organizations, the Minnesota Department of Commerce has launched “Minnesota Energy Alley” with \$3 million in funding appropriated by the Legislature. This program provides seed investments to Minnesota-based start-ups exploring climate solutions with a focus on cold-weather environments.

What's next



We all have a role to play in this work. Minnesota will continue to accelerate climate action through existing programs and launch new initiatives, many of which are funded through the historic investments of the 2023 and 2024 Legislature. These initiatives were designed to be long-term, ongoing projects with two-, five-, or 10-year lifespans. We will continue to seize opportunities to invest in programs and create policy with a transformative impact that reflects the urgency of the climate crisis.

Our state is also well-positioned to continue competing for the many federal climate funding opportunities spurred by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act.

In 2024, Minnesota will begin public engagement to update our Climate Action Framework with the goal of releasing the updated plan in 2025. As the impacts of climate change continue to intensify and Minnesota continues to identify opportunities to act, we must be nimble in our approach to climate planning.

The updated framework will include projections of the greenhouse gas reductions from our actions and a stronger focus on collaboration with local governments to build local capacity and provide technical assistance for climate planning and implementation. We will also continue efforts to enhance the health and resilience of Minnesota's landscapes, conduct an in-depth analysis of workforce needs, and develop a plan to track and report data that will quantify our measures of progress.

STAY INFORMED AND ENGAGED

Visit mn.gov/framework to learn more about the Climate Action Framework and sign up for the latest climate updates from state government.