Minnesota Businesses Support Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Dear Governor Walz, Senate President Miller, Senate Majority Leader Gazelka, Senate Minority Leader Bakk, House Speaker Hortman, House Majority Leader Winkler, and House Minority Leader Daudt,

As major businesses and employers in Minnesota, we write to express our support for the transition to a low-carbon economy. We support decarbonization strategies because they will help us ensure prolonged profitability, reduce risk, safeguard the resilience of our supply chains and allow us to better meet the growing demands of our customers and investors. We have made significant commitments to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions because climate change poses a material risk to our businesses, threatens the competitiveness and livelihoods of our supply chain, and impacts the communities in which we operate. Because of these risks to our businesses, consumers, and employees we view decarbonization as a top priority for Minnesota - and we are doing our part.

General Mills is proud to have recently achieved 100% renewable power for our direct operational needs in the United States. Our long-term goal is to achieve sustainable emission levels in line with scientific consensus by 2050. Like others among our coalition, our products and value chains are rooted in the health of agricultural systems – systems that are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and can play an important role in reducing emissions. In March, General Mills announced a commitment to advance regenerative agriculture on one million acres of farmland by 2030. Regenerative farming improves soils while reducing energy inputs and enabling higher profit margins for farmers. We see restoring soil health by applying farming practices, such as diverse crop rotations and cover cropping, as a crucial strategy for reducing GHG emissions by increasing soil-based carbon capture.

At Best Buy, we aim to be a good steward of the environment through our operations, services and products. In our operations, we are committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 and are proud that we already achieved a 51% reduction since 2009. We accomplished this through operational efficiencies, such as LED lighting retrofits, and by sourcing renewable energy. We
help our customers live more sustainably by providing a wide assortment of ENERGY STAR® certified products, such as LED light bulbs, appliances and smart thermostats, which save customers energy and money. In fact, since 2009, we helped our customers save nearly $800 million on their utility bills. We are proud of the work we have accomplished, and yet, we have the ambition and a responsibility to do more.

**Aveda** is committed to reducing carbon emissions and eventually achieving carbon neutrality. We have long made addressing climate change a priority, as one of the key threats to the biological diversity upon which our products and each of our lives depend. We support efforts to meet the Paris Agreement and we are making investments here in Minnesota, where our headquarters in Blaine and primary manufacturing facility in Minneapolis are run exclusively on wind energy. A 2017 analysis shows that clean energy investments are saving U.S. companies like ours $3.7 billion a year, freeing up significant capital that we are able to reinvest into our businesses, employees, and the communities in which we operate.\(^1\) Clean energy not only makes business sense, but it is increasingly the expectation of our customers, employees, and investors.

**Cargill** has long been working to address climate change, and has continually supported U.S. participation in the Paris climate agreement. Consistent with the science-based goals of that agreement, we have committed to reduce absolute GHG emissions in our operations by a minimum of 10 percent by 2025, against a 2017 baseline. We’ve invested in energy efficiency, multiple sources of renewable energy, and an on-site energy storage project that created over $100,000 in annual utility bill savings. We recently entered into a long-term agreement to procure electricity from a wind farm in South Dakota, consistent with our belief that the upper Midwest – including Minnesota – should maximize the economic potential of this clean resource. The sustainability of agricultural systems is also a priority for us. We are investing in our supply chains to enable more efficient and precise farming practices that help farmers improve their livelihoods and strengthen their communities, while lowering costs for customers and reducing total GHG emissions.

As a global company based in Minneapolis, **Tennant Company** sees transitioning to a low carbon economy as a business opportunity that will also create a cleaner, safer, healthier world. We have joined more than 700 of America’s largest companies in signing The Climate Declaration, a call to action urging the public, policymakers and business leaders to seize the economic opportunity in tackling climate change. We have set science-based targets to reduce GHG emissions from our facilities, vehicle fleets, and the use of our products. An ambitious target around the use of our products is critical to driving technology and product innovation as well as helping our customers reduce their environmental impact. Reducing GHG emissions helps make our business more competitive, while creating benefits for many of our stakeholders.

At **Target**, we’ve set goals that align with climate science because we see reducing GHGs as an economic imperative. We plan to reduce our absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 30% below 2017 levels by 2030. We’re also committing that 80 percent of our suppliers will set science-based reduction targets by 2023. We’ll get there by continuing to ramp up our use of solar and wind power to offset energy used at our facilities and investing in energy-efficiency at our stores.

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\(^1\) Ceres. “Power Forward 3.0: How the largest U.S. companies are capturing business value while addressing climate change” April 15, 2017. [https://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/power-forward-3](https://www.ceres.org/resources/reports/power-forward-3).
We’re working toward a commitment to source 100% renewable energy in our domestic operations and to support this initiative we will have rooftop solar at 500 locations by 2020. We’re also investing in innovations supporting the transition to a lower-carbon transportation system, including vehicle electrification, and will install electric vehicle charging at more than 600 Target parking spots.

At **Uponor**, we’re moving to have all of our 19 global manufacturing plants participate in the most ambitious energy efficiency management certifications available, including compliance to ISO 50001 in 2020. We want our products to contribute to a sustainable built environment, and strongly support policymakers developing solutions that decrease emissions from the construction industry. Clean energy is an economic opportunity for Minnesota. The state has attracted nearly $7.5 billion in renewable energy investment and more than 59,000 Minnesotans work in clean energy.²

Carbon reduction is a business imperative for **Clif Bar**. We have committed to powering all our operations, including our Minnesota location, with 100% renewable electricity and have made significant investments in energy efficiency and on-site solar at our headquarters and baking facilities, reducing energy waste and cutting costs. We engage our value chain, in Minnesota and beyond, and have already helped 44 of our supply chain facilities access the cost-savings of renewables and supporting others investing in energy efficiency, some of whom were able to cut lighting costs by 65%. We have committed to electrifying our transportation fleet, both to reduce our emissions and because the fuel and maintenance cost savings benefit our bottom line. In addition, we help our employees drive change and access the benefits of the clean energy economy by incentivizing the purchase of fuel-efficient hybrids and electric cars and supporting energy efficiency improvements in their homes.

Clean energy and regenerative agriculture are priorities for **Ben & Jerry’s**. We know the ingredients in our pints of ice cream are threatened by climate change – and see decarbonizing the economy as an urgent policy priority. We have invested early and often in energy efficiency at our manufacturing facilities, supply chain, and company owned scoop shops – including those in Minnesota. Efficiency upgrades to the lighting, refrigeration, and production equipment at one of our production facilities saved us $89,000 a year on our energy bills. Clean energy is an economic opportunity – reducing costs and creating jobs for Minnesotans. Recent analysis found that reducing electric sector carbon 80% by 2050, would not only grow local energy jobs by 300%, it would also save the average Minnesota family $600 to $1200 a year.³

As large employers and major energy consumers with diverse supply chains, we understand firsthand how important decarbonization is in an increasingly competitive marketplace. We are doing our part by investing in renewables, energy efficiency, and regenerative agriculture. We are working with our value chains, enhancing our sustainability practices, and looking to take advantage of new technologies like energy storage and electric vehicles.

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² Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2). “Clean Jobs Minnesota 2018” August 8, 2018  
https://www.cleanjobsmidwest.com/state/minnesota

We are taking climate change seriously and recognize the significant opportunity for Minnesota to do the same. Moving towards a low-carbon economy will enhance the vitality, competitiveness, and growth of our state, sending a clear signal that Minnesota is open for business.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional information.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

General Mills,
Best Buy,
Aveda,
Cargill,
Tennant Company
Target,
Uponor,
Clif Bar,
Ben & Jerry’s

CC: Members of the Minnesota Legislature

For more information, please contact Jennifer Helfrich at helfrich@ceres.org