



Bob Frenzel
CEO
Xcel Energy
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, United States
55401

November 1, 2023

Dear Mr. Frenzel,

The undersigned climate, environmental, health, and environmental justice organizations are writing to urge Xcel Energy to take an important step to affirming its commitment to a clean energy future for homes by ending its membership with the American Gas Association (AGA).

AGA has been at the forefront of efforts to obstruct progress on climate, especially when it comes to upgrading homes with clean energy equipment for heating and cooking. An [NPR investigation](#) in 2021 found that AGA is actively involved with passing state-level bills that prohibit local governments from protecting the health and safety of their constituents by phasing out fossil fuels in new homes and buildings.

The fossil fuel trade group is also notorious for working to cast doubt on the well-established health risks from cooking with gas. A new [report](#) from Climate Investigations Center finds that the gas industry knew about the link between gas stoves and dangerous levels of nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollution at least as early as 1970. Instead of warning the public about the health risks and working to make their products safer, AGA launched a campaign to manufacture and magnify controversy over the links between gas stove emissions and respiratory illness – contacting the same public relations company, Hill & Knowlton, that masterminded the tobacco industry’s response to research linking smoking to lung cancer.

Additionally, we are concerned about the leadership role that Xcel plays in the AGA with CEO Bob Frenzel serving on the Board of Directors. As a utility that meticulously markets its climate leadership to the public through ads, op-eds, and web content, Xcel should not be associated with, let alone involved in the leadership of, an organization that is working aggressively to undermine the clean energy transition. Breaking with the fossil fuel trade association would be the clearest indication to date that the utility plans to continue its historic commitment to clean energy – a commitment that has unfortunately backslid considerably in recent years.

Just four years ago, Xcel became the [first major utility](#) in the nation to commit to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050. Today, the utility is working to extend the life of its polluting fossil fuel gas system through a variety of proposals in [Colorado](#) and [Minnesota](#), while also working to prop up the gas system through its political contributions to climate opposition at the Minnesota State Legislature, and financial contributions to front groups like [Coloradans for Energy Access](#).

All-the-while paying lip service to electrification through its membership in groups like the [Colorado Beneficial Electrification League](#), which aims to advance the transition to clean energy in homes.

It's not too late for Xcel to cement its place in history as a true climate leader – and that should start with withdrawing support for dangerous organizations like the AGA. We urge Xcel to do so in order to support households in accessing the clean energy and electric heating and cooking equipment that will protect their health, cut pollution, and support the state in meeting its climate targets.

The example of Eversource Energy, an investor-owned utility in the Northeast that opted to end its AGA membership this year in order to “redirect costs to more targeted associations and memberships with a focus on decarbonization,” shows what is possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Frankowski, Executive Director, Western Clean Energy Campaign

Lauren Swain, Coordinator, PSR Colorado - Physicians for Social Responsibility

Ken Danti, President, REOCA

Portia Prescott, President, Rocky Mountain NAACP

Margaret Kran-Annexstein, Director, Colorado Sierra Club

Micah Parkin, Executive Director, 350 Colorado

Jamie Valdez, Colorado Senior Organizer, Mothers Out Front

Julia Nerbonne, Executive Director, Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light

Timothy DenHerder-Thomas, General Manager, Cooperative Energy Futures

Melissa Partin, Climate Policy Analyst, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Hudson Kingston, Legal Director, CURE

Will Kenworthy, Senior Midwest Regulatory Director, Vote Solar

John Farrell, Co-Director, Institute for Local Self Reliance

Margaret Levin, Executive Director, Sierra Club North Star Chapter

James Gignac, Midwest Senior Policy Manager, Union of Concerned Scientists

Chelsea DeArmond, Founder, St. Paul 350

Alice Madden, Energy Democracy State Lead, Community Power