



**CITY OF DULUTH
CITY COUNCIL**

330 City Hall 411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802-1189
URL: www.duluthmn.gov
Fax (218) 730-5923

EM WESTERLUND
3rd District City Councilor
Phone: (218) 355-1137
ewesterlund@duluthmn.gov

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Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place East, Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55105

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for your service to the residents of the state of Minnesota. I am writing to you today regarding the proposed Nemadji Trail Energy Center and my concerns about this project.

The Nemadji Trail Energy Center is not the best investment to meet our region's current and future energy needs. Fracked gas results in environmental degradation and contributes to climate change. In this proposal, Minnesota Power dismisses more renewable forms of energy generation as too costly, but the Administrative Law Judge Jeanne Cochran found that the company overestimated the costs of renewable alternatives in their modeling. It appears that there are more sustainable and cost-effective solutions to our region's energy demands than the fracked gas plant that has been proposed.

The cost of this proposal to Minnesota Power customers is also concerning to me. Half of this \$700 million dollar project is set to be funded through rate increases to customers. These increases are in addition to further rate increases Minnesota Power has implemented over the past two years. I represent many Duluthians who live on a fixed income and struggle to pay their monthly bills in the face of rate increases. Administrative Law Judge Jeanne Cochran indicated that this project is larger than demand indicates is necessary and that the proposal does not fully vet energy savings opportunities that might be passed on to Minnesota Power customers.

When Administrative Law Judge Jeanne Cochran recommended that this request be denied in July of this year, she stated that Minnesota Power failed to show that the Nemadji Trail Energy Center was in the public interest. I share her concerns for the reasons I have stated above and it is my hope that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will also arrive at the same conclusion.

Sincerely,

Em Westerlund
Duluth City Councilor, District 3