

Energy-Specific

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



February 11, 2025

State and Federal Funding Announcements

The **Minnesota Department of Commerce (MN Commerce)** seeks to work with and facilitate connections with local and Tribal governments, utilities, businesses, communities and other entities interested in energy-related partnerships. The opportunities outlined below are funded by state and federal energy programs.

Potential Impacts on Federal Energy Funding

MN Commerce continues to monitor actions by the Trump Administration related to federal energy funding. [As Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan have stated](#), we expect for the federal government to uphold its commitments to the people of Minnesota.

Announcements: Department of Commerce Energy Programs

Survey for newsletter – response by February 14. MN Commerce is redesigning this newsletter, and we want input from our readers to best serve you! Please provide your feedback in this short survey no later than Friday, February 14. Link here: <https://forms.office.com/g/BVv8ERMnK7>

Public Education & Resources for Potential First-Time Homebuyers

This program provides consumer education on the Down Payment Assistance Program and counseling on first time homebuying and ownership. MN Commerce requests proposals from non-profit organizations whose programs support this goal. Multiple grants are expected to be awarded with this grant opportunity. Deadline for questions is February 13, 2025, and proposal submission due date is February 24, 2025, [via the MN Commerce RFP portal](#).

Direct/Elective Pay Training - Call for Stakeholder Input

Tax-exempt and governmental entities can now receive a payment equal to the full value of tax credits for qualifying clean energy projects. This is known as Elective (or Direct) Pay and will allow Minnesota entities to secure funding to further progress towards [Minnesota Climate Action Framework](#) goals.

Following up on a Direct Pay 101 webinar held in 2024, MN Commerce is organizing a follow-up training and other resources for interested and eligible entities. If you are interested in participating in this event, please complete this form to indicate which topics are of most interest to your organization: [Direct Pay Training Form](#)

Additionally, this newsletter also features a section with more info – please look under: [Guidance on Tax Credit Programs](#)

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Recent and Expected Federal Funding Activity

The federal government issues a variety of announcements related to federal funding opportunities: Requests for Information (RFI), Notices of Intent (NOI) and energy Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA and NOFO). More information can be found on the Commerce Federal Funding Opportunities [web page](#) or by clicking the links below.

To facilitate a quick review of this newsletter, the subject matter of included items is previewed here; full details can be found in the body of the newsletter.

[Funding Opportunity Announcements \(FOA\) Administrative and Legal Requirements Document](#)

[Funding Opportunity Announcements \(FOA\), Administrative and Legal Requirements Document \(ALRD\), Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\), Requests for Applications \(RFA\)](#)

- Industrial Training & Assessment Centers (ITAC) Implementation Grants
- Accelerating CO2 Conversion Technology Development and Deployment – Biological, Catalytic, and Mineralization Pathways
- Fiscal Year 2025 Vehicle Technology Office Program Wide NOFO
- Collaborations Advancing Rapid Load Additions (CARLA)
- The Circular Supply Chains Accelerator
- State Manufacturing Leadership Program
- Regional Partnerships for Geothermal Data
- Maximizing Algal System Yield (MASY)
- Pilot-scale Rapid Operational Validation of key Energy Infrastructure Technologies (PROVE IT)- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)
- Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)
- Solar Module and Solar Hardware Incubator (SMASH Incubator)

[Tribal Governments Funding Opportunities & Items of Interest](#)

- Intent to Issue Funding: Energy Development on Tribal Lands

[Guidance on Tax Credit Programs](#)

- Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Additional Office Hours for Pre-filing Registration Tool
- Updated 45VH2-GREET
- 179D Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction

[Prizes/Awards](#)

- Community Energy Innovation Prize – Round 2

[Publications/Videos/Webpages](#)

- Strategy for Achieving a Beneficial Vehicle Grid Integration (VGI) Future
- Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Clean Hydrogen – Updated Release
- Wind Turbine Recycling Assessment Report: A Guide to Sustainable Recycling Industry
- Distributed Energy Resource Interconnection Roadmap
- Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Geothermal Heating & Cooling

[Energy-related Funding Awards to Minnesota Entities](#)

Funding Opportunity Announcements (NOFO)

- **Industrial Training & Assessment Centers (ITAC) Implementation Grants**
 - [Information & Application Portal](#)
 - **Deadline:** April 1, 2025
 - **Informational Office Hour Sessions:** March 20, 2025 | 1:00 PM CT | [Register](#)

Applications are sought for small and medium-sized manufacturing firms (SMMs) to receive grants of up to \$300,000 per unique assessment recommendation, at a 50% cost share, made in Industrial Training & Assessment Centers assessments and/or U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Combined Heat and Power Technical Assistance Partnership assessments – including what is now called “Onsite Energy TAP” assessments – and, once qualified, other assessments submitted previously for qualification as “ITAC-equivalent.”

- **Accelerating CO2 Conversion Technology Development and Deployment – Biological, Catalytic, and Mineralization Pathways**
 - [Application: DE-FOA-0003495](#)
 - **Deadline:** April 11, 2025

The DOE Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management has announced up to \$100 million for large-scale conversion of carbon emissions captured from industrial operations and power plants into environmentally responsible and economically valuable products. The funding will advance the pilot scale testing of carbon conversion technologies with high technology readiness levels capable of achieving significant carbon mitigation via biological, catalytic, or mineralization pathways. Topic areas include: Pilot-Scale Biological/ Catalytic/ Mineralization Conversion, and Other Testing and LCA Development Required for Commercialization.

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Other Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOA/NOFO)

- **Fiscal Year 2025 Vehicle Technology Office Program Wide NOFO**

- [DE-FOA-0003514 Part 1](#)
- [DE-FOA-0003514 Part 2](#)
- [General NOFO Information](#)
- **Deadlines:** Concept Paper: April 1, 2025 | Application: June 18, 2025

The DOE announced the Fiscal Year 2025 Vehicle Technologies Office Program Wide funding program. This NOFO will award up to \$88 million for projects that will seek innovative transportation solutions for on- and off-road vehicles in the areas of improved battery technology for both light- and heavy-duty applications, smart charging infrastructure, sustainable farming, workforce development, and demonstration and deployment of these new technologies. There are ten topic areas found in Part 1 of the NOFO.

- **Collaborations Advancing Rapid Load Additions (CARLA)**

- [PPO-CWX-018-GDO](#)
- **Deadlines:** Concept Papers: February 28, 2025 | Applications: April 24, 2025

ConnectWex, a Partnership Intermediary of the DOE Grid Deployment Office, has opened an initial funding opportunity to engage a collaborative or multiple collaboratives to develop new approaches and frameworks for system planning, cost recovery, and risk allocation for electricity demand growth, the goal is, to facilitate rapid action to accommodate significant near-term load additions while minimizing or preventing rate increases for residential and small commercial and industrial customers. A collaborative must include at least one State or public utility commission as lead/primary applicant, at least one grid operator; and at least one large load customer/developer (i.e., data center developers/operators, electrified transportation operator, and energy-intensive manufacturers).

- **The Circular Supply Chains Accelerator**

- [DE-FOA-0003512 Part 1](#)
- [DE-FOA-0003512 Part 2](#)
- [General NOFO Information](#)
- **Deadlines:** Concept Papers: March 31, 2025 | Applications: July 18, 2025

The DOE has announced up to \$12.5 million to establish a multi-year effort to accelerate the deployment of technologies to improve product and material circularity in support of secure and sustainable supply chains. This NOFO seeks to establish programs that advance circularity for batteries (ReCell), electrolyzers ([H2CIRC](#)), Critical Materials ([CMI Hub](#)), and composites ([IACMI](#)) and the [Wind Turbine Materials Recycling Prize](#) which may have common challenges and are ripe for collaboration to accelerate technology development and lower the cost of innovation.

- **State Manufacturing Leadership Program**

- [Information & Application Portal](#)
- **Deadline:** April 21, 2025

This is the third round of the State Manufacturing Leadership Program, which aims to remove barriers that prevent SMMs from using innovative, data-driven tools and technologies. Awardees can obtain technical assistance from [CESMI](#) and can connect their SMMs to a diverse coalition of public and private technical assistance providers.

This solicitation will support state entities, state-funded universities, and state-funded community or technical colleges to establish new or expand existing programs that assist SMMs to 1) implement smart manufacturing technologies and practices; and 2) access high-performance computing resources.

- **Regional Partnerships for Geothermal Data**

- [Information & Application Portal](#)
- **Deadlines:** Concept Paper: February 24, 2025 | Application: April 22, 2025

The intent of this initiative is to accelerate the responsible deployment of geothermal energy in multiple underdeveloped regions of the U.S. by addressing specific barriers to deployment in each area. These barriers include a lack of adequate public data to guide and incentivize geothermal exploration activities, financial barriers that impede exploratory drilling, and limited technical expertise in certain stakeholder organizations. DOE expects to make approximately 6 awards totaling approximately \$19 million with this initiative.

- **Maximizing Algal System Yield (MASY)**

- [DE-FOA-0003520 Part 1](#)
- [DE-FOA-0003520 Part 2](#)

- **Deadlines:** Concept Paper: February 21, 2025 | Application: May 15, 2025

The DOE's Bioenergy Technologies Office announced up to \$10 million in funding to support high-impact research and development focused on algae system cultivation and preprocessing. The MASY NOFO seeks applications to address 'pinch points' (defined as a challenge area within a proposed system that, if relieved, would enable scaling towards commercialization) in algal system operations that currently limit algae expansion as a domestic bioenergy feedstock.

- **Pilot-scale Rapid Operational Validation of Key Energy Infrastructure Technologies (PROVE IT)– Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)**
 - [Solicitation](#)
 - **Deadlines:** Step 1 Submission Package: April 7, 2025 | Step 2 Submission Package: June 2, 2025

The DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations is issuing this solicitation to support the validation of existing pilot projects or subsystems in a relevant industrial environment to: 1) increase their technology readiness to the point of being able to be integrated in a large clean energy infrastructure project, and 2) increase their adoption readiness level to medium/high. This funding will be open to small, independent, domestic businesses, and is split into two topic areas: 1) \$22 million for up to five pilot-scale-ready carbon capture projects, and 2) up to \$9 million for up to two long-duration energy storage projects.

- **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)**
 - [RBS-24-Business-0015](#)
 - **Deadline:** March 31, 2025

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's REAP grants can be used by agricultural producers & small businesses (including those Tribally owned or Tribal member owned) and rural small businesses for the purchase, installation, and construction of energy efficiency improvements, and replacement of energy-inefficient equipment. This program also funds the purchase and installation of renewable energy systems, such as: Biomass, Geothermal, Hydropower below 30 megawatts, Hydrogen, Small and Large Wind Generation, Small and Large Solar Generation, & Ocean generation. Funding ranges from \$500,000 for an energy efficiency improvement project to \$1,000,000 for a renewable energy system project.

- **Solar Module and Solar Hardware Incubator (SMASH Incubator)**
 - [DE-FOA-0003460](#)
 - **Deadlines:** Concept Paper: March 21, 2025 | Application: May 30, 2025

The DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, Solar Energy Technologies Office seeks to address a lack of sufficient private investment. This NOFO will encourage innovations in PV manufacturing with the aim of reducing reliance on imported materials and technologies. Private, for-profit entities are eligible applicants. Topic Areas include non-module solar hardware technology and crystalline silicon or cadmium telluride solar module technology, covering all segments of the supply chain.

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Tribal Governments Funding Opportunities & Items of Interest

- **Notice of Intent: Energy Development on Tribal Lands**
 - [Notice of Intent: Energy Development on Tribal Lands](#)

The DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs issued an NOI to release a \$25 million NOFO this spring to support energy technology deployment on Tribal lands. Awards from this planned NOFO are anticipated to range from \$100,000 to \$2.5 million or from \$250,000 to \$5 million, depending on the area of interest. Applications will be due approximately 90 days after the NOFO is issued.

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Guidance on Tax Credit Programs

- **IRS Additional Office Hours for the Pre-filing Registration Tool**
 - [Register for the Pre-filing Tool & Office Hours](#)

The IRS has announced additional office hours to help entities with the tax credit pre-registration process on the Pre-filing Registration Tool. Registration for office hours is required

and now open.

- **Updated 45VH2-GREET**
 - [Access the 45VH2-GREET Model](#)

The DOE released an update to the 45VH2-GREET (Greenhouse gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Technologies life cycle assessment) model, which has been adopted by the Department of the Treasury for the purposes of calculating well-to-gate emissions of hydrogen production facilities for the clean hydrogen production tax credit established in Internal Revenue Code (I.R.C.) section 45V ("45V tax credit").

The model is designed specifically to evaluate the emissions of hydrogen production processes, to meet the requirements and objectives of section 45V, and to include features that make it easy to use for taxpayers.

- **179D Energy Efficient Commercial Buildings Tax Deduction**
 - [179D Portal](#)

Section 179D of the Internal Revenue Code provides a federal tax deduction for placing in service energy efficient commercial building property or energy efficient building retrofit property as part of interior lighting systems, heating, cooling, ventilation, and hot water systems, or the building envelope. 179D has been amended for taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2022. It can be applied to both new construction and building upgrade projects.

DOE has new estimation tools for the Traditional (Modeling) Pathway and the Alternative (Measurement) Pathway to estimate potential federal tax deductions for installing eligible energy-efficient technologies in commercial buildings.

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Prizes/Awards

- **Community Energy Innovation Prize – Round 2**
 - [Rules & Information](#)
 - [Prize Overview](#)
 - **Deadline:** June 20, 2025

The DOE has announced the second round of the Community Energy Innovation Prize, a competition supporting grassroots innovation, entrepreneurship, capacity building, and economic development in communities historically underrepresented in clean energy development. Teams have the chance to win part of the \$8.42 million prize pool to fund their ongoing activities that address local challenges in clean energy, energy efficiency, manufacturing, materials, and transportation. The Community Energy Innovation Prize is made up of three Ecosystem tracks, each with distinct focus areas, over three phases: 1) Clean Energy, 2) Manufacturing, and 3) Vehicles.

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Publications/Videos/Webpages

- **Strategy for Achieving a Beneficial Vehicle Grid Integration (VGI) Future**

The DOE has released its [Strategy for Achieving a Beneficial Vehicle Grid Integration \(VGI\) Future](#). The Strategy document identifies DOE activities that support utilities, electric vehicle automakers, regulators, charging providers, aggregators, and other stakeholders as they implement VGI solutions. Through three mutually supporting strategies, DOE aims to increase stakeholder certainty in VGI technologies to catalyze investment in and widespread adoption of VGI approaches.

- **Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Clean Hydrogen – Updated Release**

This new [report](#) shows that the U.S. clean hydrogen market continues to promise rapid growth, accelerated by historic commitments like the [Regional Clean Hydrogen Hubs](#); the [Clean Hydrogen Production Tax Credit \(45V\)](#); and [DOE's ongoing programs](#) for research, development, demonstration, and deployment of clean hydrogen technologies.

- **Wind Turbine Recycling Assessment Report: A Guide to Sustainable Recycling Industry**

[A new report](#) funded by DOE and co-authored by NREL, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and Sandia National Laboratories provides strategies to optimize and enhance existing wind turbine recycling processes. The DOE's Wind Energy Technologies Office and its partners are working to

recycling processes. The DOE's Wind Energy Technologies Office and its partners are working to develop efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible ways to manage the volume of decommissioned wind turbine materials. Full recyclability of U.S. wind energy systems is expected to become feasible in coming years. These recycling pathways can help alleviate potential supply chain constraints related to wind energy and help reduce emissions and pollutants to air, land, and water throughout the life cycle of wind technology.

- **Distributed Energy Resource Interconnection Roadmap**

The DOE's [Distributed Energy Resource \(DER\) Interconnection Roadmap](#) identifies solutions to address challenges in the interconnection of clean energy resources to the distribution and sub-transmission grids. The roadmap provides the diverse group of interconnection stakeholders with strategies to improve interconnection processes to meet the growing demand for distributed energy resources.

- **Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Geothermal Heating & Cooling**

The DOE has released its [Pathways to Commercial Liftoff: Geothermal Heating and Cooling report](#), highlighting the potential of geothermal energy to support a resilient electricity system while providing cost savings and efficient heating and cooling to households and businesses nationwide.

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Energy-related Funding Awards to Minnesota Entities

Read on to learn more about the most recent innovative Minnesota energy projects (listed by Funding Opportunity Program), and the funding they have been awarded. **Congratulations to all the recipients!**

Grid-Edge Technology and Smart Charge Management

The DOE announced \$32 million for six selected pilot projects that will support new load growth through grid-edge innovations and the ability of energy providers to right-size grid investments for future load growth.

- **The Accelerating Community-wide Connected Electric Loads & Energy Reliability Achieved Through Integration with Nationwide Grid (ACCELERATING) Connectivity initiative (Minnesota)**, led by the **Beneficial Electrification League**, will advance a nationally scalable approach for building load management. The project will prioritize partnerships with electric cooperatives in Minnesota that advance communications to optimize residential thermal loads as grid assets. (Award amount: \$5.3 million)

Communities Taking Charge Accelerator

The Joint Office of Energy and Transportation announced selections for the [Communities Taking Charge Accelerator](#) which expands zero-emission transportation options, and a more resilient and scalable energy system.

- **Hennepin County - \$822,520 federal award - Fully Charged Communities: Expanding EV Hub-Based Charging in the Twin Cities** – The project will establish a network of integrated hub-based carshare and public-facing electric vehicle chargers. This expands the coverage of the HOURCAR carshare network to provide affordable, sustainable mobility solutions to residents without home charging options or personal vehicles.
- **Oonee - \$3,774,248 federal award - "I-EMPOWER" - Integrated Electric Micromobility POverHubs for Equitable Replication – Minneapolis** - I-EMPOWER will design and deploy the country's first two networks of integrated infrastructure hubs that provide both secure parking and safe charging for personal e-micromobility.
- **The Great Plains Institute for Sustainable Development, Inc. - \$458,792 federal award** – This project will stand up a new, fully electric and equitable bike share system that will be comprehensively integrated with existing public transit and electric car share options in the Twin Cities region.

Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced selection of [105 applications](#) for the Community Change Grants Program, totaling nearly \$1.6 billion in awards. Minnesota-based projects include:

- **Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association, Inc. (MTERA) & GRID Alternatives** - will work with 35 federally recognized Tribes in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin to support energy efficiency and weatherization upgrades. They will invest in leadership development training for Tribal Energy Champions to build additional funding sources and implement projects.
- **Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC), Sabathani Community Center (SCC), and the Minneapolis Climate Resilience Partnership** - will support upgrades at community-based resilience hubs in Minneapolis. MAIC will use \$4 million to complete building renovation, including energy efficiency upgrades and rooftop solar preparation. SCC will use \$6 million to complete the first phase of SCC's geothermal energy system and a new geothermal workforce program. Both will be training sites for geothermal, heat pumps, solar, and microgrid systems.
- **Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe & Cass Lake Boys and Girls Club** – this project will provide essential emergency services and will be equipped with a rooftop solar and battery storage system. The Tribe also will invest in EVs and multimodal transportation infrastructure, including EV transit vans and electric bikes.

Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program

The EPA has announced that 70 applicants will receive over \$735 million to assist in the purchase of over 2,400 zero-emission vehicles. EPA's Clean Heavy-Duty Vehicles Grant Program will replace existing internal combustion engine heavy-duty vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, while also supporting the build out of clean vehicle infrastructure, as well as the training of workers to deploy these new zero-emission technologies.

- **Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community - \$190,000** - will use grant funding to replace its laundry truck with an all-electric alternative and new charging infrastructure.

USDA Electric Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Program

USDA is providing \$5.7 billion in funding to help utility providers and electric cooperatives build and improve electric infrastructure and smart-grid technologies in 23 states. The following [Minnesota Utilities](#) have received loans from the USDA Electric Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Programs:

- **Meeker Cooperative Light & Power** - \$16,493,000 to connect 572 consumers, build and improve 166 miles of line. This loan includes \$980,500 in smart grid technologies.
- **Stearns Co-Op Electric Association** - \$47,914,000 to connect 1,476 consumers, build and improve 479 miles of line. This loan includes \$8,315,680 in smart grid technologies.
- **Traverse Electric Cooperative** - \$10,836,000 to connect 276 consumers, build and improve 132 miles of line. This loan includes \$690,000 in smart grid technologies.
- **Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric** – \$29,750,000 to connect 222 consumers, build and improve 86 miles of line. This loan includes \$4,633,900 in smart grid technologies.
- **Wright-Hennepin Co-Op Electric Association** - \$31,162,000 to connect 876 consumers, build and improve 97 miles of line.
- **Wright-Hennepin Co-Op Electric Association** - \$36,295,000 to connect 4,419 consumers and build 163 miles of line.
- **Minnesota Valley Cooperative LPA** - \$26,831,000 to connect 121 consumers, build and improve 102 miles of line. This loan includes \$786,472 in smart grid technologies.
- **Lake Region Electric Cooperative** - \$11,711,000 will be used to connect 783 consumers, build and improve 54 miles of line.
- **Benco Electric Cooperative** - \$31,000,000 to connect 1,213 consumers, build and improve 130 miles of line. This loan includes \$862,537 in smart grid technologies.
- **Cooperative Light & Power Association of Lake City** - \$6,869,000 to connect 267 consumers, build and improve 55 miles of line. This loan includes \$919,800 in smart grid technologies.
- **East Central Energy** - \$73,133,000 to connect 2,524 consumers, build and improve 409 miles of line. This loan includes \$8,141,000 in smart grid technologies.

Innovative Technology Solutions to Boost Domestic Production and Recovery of Essential Materials for Next-Generation Technologies

The DOE has announced an investment of \$17 million across [14 projects](#) that spans 11 states, strengthens and streamlines manufacturing for high-impact components and technologies such as hydrogen fuel cells, magnets for high-efficiency motors, high-performance lithium-ion batteries, and

high-yield low-defect power electronics.

Use magnets with reduced critical materials content:

- **Niron Magnetics, Inc.** – Minneapolis - \$2,700,000

Projects to Advance Production of Purpose-Grown Energy Crops

The DOE's Bioenergy Technologies Office has announced \$52 million in funding for six university and industry projects to advance the production of low carbon intensity, purpose-grown energy crops critical to accelerating a clean energy bioeconomy.

- **University of Minnesota – Twin Cities** – Minneapolis - \$9,999,893 - This project will establish a relay cropping system that produces an intermediate oilseed as a harvestable winter crop between a summer annual grain and soybean—three crops in two years. This cropping system is expected to produce low carbon intensity scores for the oilseed crops and address intractable environmental problems in agriculture.

Clean Energy to Communities Peer-Learning Cohorts

The DOE has announced leaders from 38 entities will join one of three peer-learning cohorts to exchange strategies and best practices, learn from DOE's national laboratory experts, and workshop policy and program proposals relating to distributed wind, renewable energy, and energy efficiency, and microgrids.

Expanding Capacity for Distributed Wind in Rural and Agricultural Communities:

- **Clean up the River Environment (CURE)** – Minnesota

Planning for Microgrids to Increase Energy Resilience:

- **University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center** - Morris, Minnesota

Grid Resilience and Innovative Partnerships (GRIP)

GRIP programs accelerate the deployment of transformative projects that will help ensure the reliability of the power sector's infrastructure. DOE's Grid Deployment Office has selected the following Minnesota entities (from the first two funding rounds) to receive GRIP awards:

- **Minnesota Power** - Federal Cost Share: \$50,000,000 | Recipient Cost Share: \$54,116,574
- **Georgia Transmission Corporation** – Federal Cost Share: \$97,910,605 | Recipient Cost Share: \$97,910,605 | The broad geographic scope of this award contributes to national transmission reliability including in Minnesota
- **GridUnity Inc.** - Federal Cost Share: \$49,500,000 | Recipient Cost Share: \$49,500,000
- **Holy Cross Energy** - Federal Cost Share: \$99,328,430 | Recipient Cost Share: \$45,762,816
- **Minnesota Department of Commerce** - Federal Cost Share: \$464,000,000 | Recipient Cost Share: \$1,300,000,000
- **Otter Tail Power Company** - Federal Cost Share: \$19,585,751 | Recipient Cost Share: \$29,873,299
- **Xcel Energy Services, Inc.** - Federal Cost Share: \$100,000,000 | Recipient Cost Share: \$142,020,463

Vehicle Technologies Office Research & Development Funding

The DOE's Vehicle Technologies Office has announced a \$51.7 million investment in transportation innovation projects aimed at expanding affordable, reliable mobility options across America. The 19 projects selected for this funding will focus on advancing a broad range of next generation technologies for the transportation sector.

- **University of Minnesota, Twin Cities - \$1,859,925 –Hybrid Powertrain with Renewable Fuel Engine: Agricultural Sprayer Demonstration.** The project will develop a low-cost, highly efficient, zero global warming potential (GWP) powertrain for off-road vehicles. The renewable fuel engine provides the energy density required for a high-power machine with long required run times, where batteries are size and cost prohibitive, and taps into emerging efforts to create widely available biomethane with anaerobic digesters of manure and biomass.

Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning - (R-STEP)

The DOE has announced the selection of four projects totaling \$7.1 million to expand and improve planning, siting, and permitting processes for large-scale renewable energy and energy storage facilities.

- **University of Minnesota, Extension - \$1.2 million** - The collaborative will engage diverse stakeholders to assess needs, expand technical assistance services, and maintain training and educational resources to expand local officials' capacity to engage constructively in planning, siting, and permitting for large-scale renewable energy projects.

Building Upgrades Inspire Local Transformation (BUILT) Nonprofits

The DOE's Office of State and Community Energy Programs announced 22 community-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations will receive a total of \$2 million to support building improvement projects that reduce energy use and generate short and long-term energy cost savings.

- **Crow River Players, Inc. dba Little Theatre Auditorium, New London** - Crow River Players Little Theatre Auditorium is a non-profit organization working to amplify the storytelling of artists and culture-bearers, those from our immigrant communities, and those identifying as BIPOC and LGBTQ2IA+.

Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Program – Round Two

The U.S. Department of Transportation [announced](#) \$635 million in grants to continue building out electric vehicle charging and alternative fueling infrastructure. The grants fund 49 projects to deploy more than 11,500 EV charging ports and hydrogen and natural gas fueling infrastructure along corridors and in communities across 27 states, four federally recognized Tribes, and the District of Columbia.

- **Shakopee Mdwakanton Sioux Community, Strategic EV Charger Deployment - \$1,345,466** - For workforce development and the installation of 20 publicly accessible EV charging ports in Prior Lake.
- **Metropolitan Council, Twin Cities Charging and Fueling Infrastructure - \$15,000,000** - To deploy 1,875 EV charging ports across the region. The project will prioritize renters, rural areas, low-and moderate-income neighborhoods, and environmental justice communities.

FY 24 Energy and Emissions Intensive Industries Funding Selections

The DOE announced [more than \\$136 million for 66 selected projects](#) to advance technology solutions for 75% of the nation's industrial base. These industries account for over 75% of the U.S. industrial energy demand, employ roughly 13 million Americans, and contribute roughly \$27 trillion to U.S. GDP.

Topic Area 2 – Decarbonizing Iron and Steel

- **University of Minnesota - Duluth (UMD) – Transformative Taconite Beneficiation Flowsheet of the Future - \$3.1 million** - UMD, in partnership with U.S. Steel, aims to develop a transformational new beneficiation process for upgrading Minnesotan taconite ores to a "direct reduction" (DR) grade, which will process industrial feedstock material up to 1 ton per hour. This approach will seek to reduce the overall energy demand of DR grade pellet production by 25%, increase iron recovery by 3–5% through efficiency increases, and improve pellet quality.
- **UMD – Graphite Core Induction Smelting Technology for Production of CO2-Free Carburized Pig Iron - \$2,997,738** – UMD and its partners look to scale and demonstrate a flow-through induction melting furnace with a novel graphite susceptor core concept, targeted explicitly toward pre-processing low-grade direct reduced iron (DRI) into a carburized pig iron product, which is gangue-free. It is suitable as a high-value drop-in replacement for merchant pig iron in electric arc furnaces and will allow for significant emissions reductions while maintaining high productivity and economically competitive production of steel.

Topic Area 6 – Innovative Industrial Pre-FEED Studies

- **UMD – Integrated Green Hydrogen-Based Iron Plant to Support the Green Steel Supply Chain - \$1,340,413** - UMD and its partners aim to examine the construction of a hydrogen-based DRI plant. For this Pre-FEED study, the facility will use hydrogen instead of coal or natural gas, with onsite integration of hydrogen generation by electrolysis, renewable electricity generation, and storage for hydrogen and energy.

American-Made Tribal College and University Energy Food Sovereignty Nexus Prize – Phase 1

The DOE Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs announced 14 Phase 1 winners of the American-Made [Tribal College and University \(TCU\) Energy and Food Sovereignty Nexus Prize](#). Student-led groups teamed up and created plans to increase the use of renewable energy to support Tribal food sovereignty initiatives on TCU campuses.

- **White Earth Tribal & Community College, Mahnomen - \$40,000 cash prize and will advance to Phase 2a.**

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Energy-specific funding opportunities, Commerce is here for you

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energy specific funding opportunities

February 11, 2025

State and Federal Funding Announcements

The *Minnesota Department of Commerce (MN Commerce) *seeks to work with and facilitate connections with local and Tribal governments, utilities, businesses, communities and other entities interested in energy-related partnerships. The opportunities outlined below are funded by state and federal energy programs.

Potential Impacts on Federal Energy Funding

MN Commerce continues to monitor actions by the Trump Administration related to federal energy funding. As Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan have stated [<https://mn.gov/governor/newsroom/press-releases/#/detail/appId/1/id/666912>], we expect for the federal government to uphold its commitments to the people of Minnesota.

Announcements: Department of Commerce Energy Programs

*Survey for newsletter – response by February 14. *MN Commerce is redesigning this newsletter, and we want input from our readers to best serve you! Please provide your feedback in this short survey no later than Friday, February 14. Link here: <https://forms.office.com/g/BVv8ERmK7>

*Public Education & Resources for Potential First-Time Homebuyers *

This program provides consumer education on the Down Payment Assistance Program and counseling on first time homebuying and ownership. MN Commerce requests proposals from non-profit organizations whose programs support this goal. Multiple grants are expected to be awarded with this grant opportunity. Deadline for questions is February 13, 2025, and proposal submission due date is February 24, 2025, via the MN Commerce RFP portal [<https://mn.gov/commerce/business/rfp.jsp>].

Direct/Elective Pay Training - Call for Stakeholder Input

Tax-exempt and governmental entities can now receive a payment equal to the full value of tax credits for qualifying clean energy projects. This is known as Elective (or Direct) Pay and will allow Minnesota entities to secure funding to further progress towards Minnesota Climate Action Framework [