Mike Bull: We started passing pretty consensus-based energy policy beginning in something like 2003. It was hard-fought, but by the end it worked. We had this signing ceremony where folks with ponytails were standing next to the Chamber president and next to the Governor. So that kind of became the “Minnesota Way” of doing energy policy. We followed that up in 2005 with a big package that involved community wind and transmission planning that passed overwhelmingly. Then in 2006 we passed nation-leading mercury emissions legislation without a negative vote.

Margaret Hodnik: I think that set a precedent for using stakeholder groups to arrive at legislation that everyone can support in the end, even if they don’t get what they want.

Amy Koch: There was a real spirit of “what can we realistically do.”

Margaret Anderson Kelliher: That was a big “aha moment.” We can lead on this issue and we have an obligation to lead on this issue.

Andy Pomroy: That was the first time I’d ever heard of a renewable energy standard. I remember going out to Wilmar to work with Rep. Al Junke. He said it was important to talk about renewable energy and the fact that he supported a standard as opposed to voluntary objectives.

Mike Bull: At the time we had a policy in place called the Renewable Energy Objective. Utilities had to make a good faith effort to have 10 percent of their resources coming from renewables.

Ellen Anderson: When we first introduced this bill in 2001 it was way out there. To think that wind energy could be a big part of our electricity? That was sort of for dreamers. But the landscape changed.

Mike Bull: I was with the Pawlenty administration and we were certain that we were going to lose and Pawlenty was going to be out. Then there was the Mike Hatch situation that changed the fortunes for the governor, but not the election dynamics which were very pro-progressive energy policy.

Mike Bull: I was with the Pawlenty administration and we were certain that we were going to lose and Pawlenty was going to be out. Then there was the Mike Hatch situation that changed the fortunes for the governor, but not the election dynamics which were very pro-progressive energy policy.

Andy Pomroy: A huge wave in the House and Senate for Democrats. We had 85 House members, which was up 19 seats from the year before. The Senate was already in the majority but they were in a significantly bigger majority as well.

Bill Hilty: I would say that working with Mike and Ed was always kind of amusing. Margaret Anderson Kelliher: They were Frick and Frack at that point.

Bill Hilty: They were always together, I think because Ed didn’t trust Mike to talk to anyone without him being there.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher: Mike was a known quantity because he had been in House Research for so long. I think House members really trusted Mike.

Bill Hilty: But Ed was kind of slippery. I mean he would freely admit that his job was to not tell anybody anything. And he was good at it.

Yvonne Prettner Solon: Ed Garvey and Mike Bull could come to visit me but they could never give me Pawlenty’s agreement on anything.

Mike Bull: It was the day after the election, that Wednesday, we had all those Democrats in the House and Senate, this renewable energy standard was one of the signature things that everybody ran and we knew it was just going to pass. So we had to get out ahead of it.

Ellen Anderson: I knew, and I said this in a press conference in November right after the election, that “the stars are aligned.” That we’re going to pass the renewable energy standard this year.

Mike Bull: The renewable energy standard was a piece of it but it had to be more than that. Ed’s plan was “we’ve got to flood the zone.” We had this wonderful event in December where the Governor lays out this Next Generation Energy Act vision with renewable energy, the energy efficiency increase, the carbon goals.*

Kathy Tinglestad: I think because that had happened early, that kind of opened the door for House Republicans to be with him.

Mike Bull: We thought we would show that the governor’s out there leading on clean energy stuff and it was the Democrats who wouldn’t be able to pass stuff. That was the plan.

Bill Hilty: Frankly, I thought that what they were doing was basically a ploy. That they would put this out, it wouldn’t pass, or it would just get totally watered down to nothing. And the administration would say “see those damn Democrats can’t even pass a bill.” So my thought was, well let’s just call their bluff.

Kate Knuth: Bill introduced the governor’s bill.

Mike Bull: I remember seeing the look on his face as he said “we’re going to pass your bill.” Oh shit.

Aaron Peterson: Hilty, he’s such a strategist.

Mike Bull: He basically put it back to us. I was loving it, because I wanted to get a whole bunch of stuff done.

Dennis Lien: [Legislative leaders] held a press conference to start with. It was more than that. It was clearer that there was enough strength in the Senate certainly and the Democrats had regained control of the House. Pawlenty had already been on record saying he supported clean energy proposals.

Mike Bull: It wasn’t whether to do a renewable energy standard, it was how to do a renewable energy standard. It wasn’t whether to set a statewide cap on carbon emissions, it was how to do it.

Bill Hilty: Way back when I had my first philosophy course in college I was really taken by William James and his major work called Pragmatism. I think what I took away from that is that you should always focus on outcomes. You know, what are you trying to do here. I tried to stay focused on that.

John Tuma: Even though the Senate and the House kind of had their own things going on, there was a lot of good communication going on across the bodies, which is not always the case.

Edward Garvey: Bill and Yvonne were people with incredible common sense.

Mike Bull: They spun off the renewable energy standard and passed that early because it really was a signature thing that everyone had run on. So the renewable energy standard actually passed separately from the Next Generation Energy Act, early in the session.

Bill Hilty: Ellen and others had been pushing in the previous session when Republicans were in control in the Senate. That bill already had a history, so as soon as it became feasible to pass the thing, we jumped on that.

Mike Bull: Governors get credit, even if they don’t like something, when they sign it. They own it. It’s theirs. So he knew that would happen. Even though he couldn’t propose a standard, he was telling everyone that it was going to come.

Amy Koch: Had the Governor not been supportive of this, I think it would have struggled to get anywhere.

Edward Garvey: It’s sort of like everyone can look back at our vacation and decide “gosh that trip to Disneyland was really great.” But what if dad had said “we’re not going to Disneyland, we’re going to the lake.”

Amy Koch: Governor Pawlenty was a key player in this. He wanted to see something get done.

John Tuma: Tim Pawlenty deserves a lot of credit.

*Read Governor Pawlenty’s energy speech www.fresh-energy.org/2007Energy
HOW THE STORY UNFOLDED

Kathy Tingelstad: Republicans typically come out more conservative on these issues but they felt like “if our governor is with it, we can be with it.”

Andy Pomroy: Aaron is much newer to the legislature and really make sure it all came back together in good shape.

Bob Ambrose: Bill is like Tigger and Aaron is like Eeyore and Aaron definitely the prairie populist. It’s almost like Bill is like Reyore and Aaron is like Tigger, with energy everywhere. I really think with Bill this became a huge passion.

Yvonne Prettner Solon: He kind of liked the direction we were going in, except when it appeared, it appeared like we were going to back down. Then everybody would get nervous. In fact, some people left the room at one time. They got up, got all their members and said “we’re out of here.”

John Tuma: There was a point; we called the walkout. It was in room 107. I said, “Madame Chair, with all due respect we are not going to sit down with these people are trying to take us. It’s not legitimate and we’re walking out.” It looked like a perceived split but I was hoping in the end we would get something to bring back to our rump-caucus who walked out of the negotiations. Unbeknownst to me it really strengthened Yvonne’s hand.

Yvonne Prettner Solon: I remember that Ellen Anderson was very nervous. She thought we were backing down on her renewable energy goals and she was the chief author of that bill. But we actually got stronger goals.

Kate Knuth: Usually you work on things over time and they get less and less, whereas with the renewable energy standard, the strategy was to ask for more and more every year.

Bob Ambrose: I remember a meeting — a previously scheduled meeting — of our senior management with the heads of each of our member co-ops. I think it was in Brainerd and it was damn cold, you know. My boss and I had talked with our CEO and he knew what our plan was. I remember we were all sitting around in a circle, and we talked about it and we said “we need to do this” and unless you object we’re going to do it. I’m sure the issue was not a surprise to them. It was an “OK” and I got in the car after the meeting, drove down to St. Paul for a hearing scheduled for that afternoon in Yvonne’s committee. I probably should have given more notice than I did to the other co-ops’ lobbyists. Just with the time pressures I didn’t think I told them, until literally we walked in the room, that we were going to testify in favor. So I did testify in support. I testified in support of the 20 percent by ’20. It wasn’t 25 (percent) until later. I was able to persuade people that we could support that because frankly it was the same pace. If we could meet 20 by ’20, an increase of another percent a year for the next five years, that seemed doable.

Mike Bull: If you felt your reliability would be threatened on your system you could come to the commission and take an off-ramp. If you felt there would be a
Reaching every corner of the state, Fresh Energy and the Will Steger Foundation collaborated on a series of events to discuss clean energy solutions. Over 12 months they held more than 65 events, traveled more than 4,000 miles, and reached thousands of Minnesotans.

The message I really sold to them was we could burn more coal and send more trains out to Wyoming to pay for employees in Wyoming and make money for some wealthy guy who we didn’t even know or we could figure out a new economy where we’re very diversified. The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators.

The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators.

John Tuma

Our economy in this energy area is going to be a reality as part of the new economy where we’re going to lead on the huge technological and economic transition that the world is going to undergo.

Amy Koch

“Isn’t this a Republican issue and this isn’t a Democrat issue, this is an issue of whether or not we’re going to lead on the huge technological and economic transition that the world is going to undergo.”

Aaron Peterson

This isn’t a Republican issue and this isn’t a Democrat issue, this is an issue of whether or not we’re going to lead on the huge technological and economic transition that the world is going to undergo.

Amy Koch

The Renewable Energy Standard helps with climate, but it’s not just about climate. It’s about rural economic development. It’s about economic development, full stop.

Kate Knuth

I was at I thought that this was a huge opportunity and that the world was going to cause the bill some grief, but it was actually signed, I think, by February.

Bill Hilty

One thing I remember for sure was the day the RES passed, as the vote total registered the House broke into applause. I never saw that before and I’ve never seen it since. That I will never forget.

Bill Hilty

Another Republican from the northwest, was the one thing I never saw that before and it felt like they were empowered behind the scenes.

Edward Garvey

Mike Bull: 216H sets a cap on the statewide carbon emissions that were either emitted in the state through power generation or imported to the state through power generation.

Edward Garvey

It’s about rural economic development, it’s about economic development, full stop.

Kate Knuth

“It’s about rural economic development, it’s about economic development, full stop.”

Kate Knuth

“I think the most interesting discussions were behind closed doors.”

Dennis Lien

Another important factor was, I remember in caucus specifically, people saying “listen, the governor’s going to sign this bill.” And everyone is kind of not buying it, and they said “no, you need to get in front of this stuff. The governor’s going to sign this, let’s get something we can deal with.”

John Tuma

The renewables, so I’m open to that. I am for renewables, I don’t think I just think something balanced. At the time, we hadn’t done a lot with renewables, so I’m open to that.

Kathy Tinglestad

We have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators. And if we can set a goal for them, we can put that goal out there, those innovators who live here and make money here and pay taxes here can be the ones producing our energy.

Ellen Anderson: First, bringing experts on any of this stuff, let alone all of it. So what you have to do is a set of people who have common sense and a thoughtful direction that you all want to go in.

Amy Koch

My biggest issue was I just think we need something balanced. At the time, we hadn’t done a lot with renewables, so I’m open to that.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher

Margaret Anderson Kelliher: There was a link between energy, renewables, so I’m open to that. I think as a[...]

John Tuma

John Tuma: There’s a few Republicans like John Berns and Kathy Tinglestad who came in supporting this issue already.

John Berns: I think as a[...]

Kathy Tinglestad: I was coming from the background of working on air quality issues and energy efficiency through a lot of K-12 education facility work.

Yvonne Prettner Solon: It was really important for me to make sure that the Republicans were involved. When I was uncertain where the Republicans were on the big renewable energy issue, was our opportunity and our chance to make a difference.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher

“The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators.”

John Tuma

We have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators. And if we can set a goal for them, we can put that goal out there, those innovators who live here and make money here and pay taxes here can be the ones producing our energy.

Ellen Anderson

The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators. And if we can set a goal for them, we can put that goal out there, those innovators who live here and make money here and pay taxes here can be the ones producing our energy.

Ellen Anderson

The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators.

John Tuma

John Tuma: The big thing that really moved a lot of Republicans was really the concept of this diversified economy in this energy area creating jobs in Minnesota.

John Tuma

The message I really sold to them was we could burn more coal and send more trains out to Wyoming to pay for employees in Wyoming and make money for some wealthy guy who we didn’t even know or we could figure out a new economy where we’re very diversified. The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators. And if we can set a goal for them, we can put that goal out there, those innovators who live here and make money here and pay taxes here can be the ones producing our energy.

Ellen Anderson

The one thing we have in Minnesota is innovation. We don’t have coal, but we have innovators.

John Tuma

significant rate impact, you could come to the [Public Utilities Commission] and take an off-ramp.

Amy Koch: Because of these off-ramps, I think they started to see that what they were saying was becoming a reality as part of the legislation.

John Tuma: The big thing that really moved a lot of Republicans was really the concept of this diversified economy in this energy area creating jobs in Minnesota.
wouldn’t support it and neither would the administration. So that was another bluff-calling. The original provision said basically that the administration, within two years, would come up with an emissions reduction plan that was supposed to be resolved through some more stakeholder hearings. And I thought at the time “they’re not going to do this. Nothing is going to happen.” So let’s say, since it’s Pawlenty’s bill and he said they’re going to do this, let’s say we’ll put off the moratorium on new coal for two years because by then this plan will be in place, they said it would. Of course nothing ended up coming out of those stakeholder hearings. But it worked.

Aaron Peterson: Hilty had them the whole time.

John Tuma: Bill really impressed me. Boy, he was putting pieces together. Just like Yvonne, even though they were on different ends in terms of how they were playing it, they seemed to be working together really well behind the scenes. In the end, I saw how he took what looked like was going to be a complete defeat and switched it around to get exactly what we were asking for in the first place. He was strategizing on that from the get-go.

Mike Bull: If you add up all the ‘no’ votes for the energy bills from that session, there were more votes cast against making the Honeycrisp the state apple. It was bipartisan and overwhelmingly supported.

Amy Koch: Everybody always says government doesn’t get anything done, but this was not a small piece of legislation.

Kate Knuth: To see that this was possible, that big things are possible, is really energizing and important for young people to see in politics and I think this energy work is definitely one of them.

Edward Garvey: The policies that were put in play, were put in play in a way that have held up to the test of time.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher: It really strengthened the overall portfolio of these utilities.

Margaret Hodnik: Wind energy has come in at pretty reasonable cost overall. We got to 25 percent at the end of last year, ten years early.

Ellen Anderson: The fact that wind is really the lowest-cost resource in the wholesale markets in the Midwest and that Xcel Energy is the number one wind utility in the United States. Wow. These things have really accelerated way beyond a lot of people’s expectations.

Mike Bull: The [2014] DEED report that came out really made us realize the economic impact. We always talked about it. For me it was always the environmental progress that we wanted to make, but we also saw the economic impact.

(See charts on adjacent page.)

Kathy Tingelstad: Especially coming out of the recession, anything that was good for generating jobs was obviously helpful to the economy.

Bill Hilty: In retrospect, I realize that this was an important step. It probably catalyzed a lot of other things across the country.

Mike Bull: We went to those Midwest governors’ meetings sort of saying, ‘Look what we just did. We did it in Minnesota. There’s no reason why you can’t do it in Illinois. There’s no reason why you can’t do it in Iowa.’ It allowed us to have a certain cachet and push policy forward.

Aaron Peterson: People have jobs in this now. It’s not a side show. Utilities have figured out how to integrate it. It’s become a lot more sophisticated. Utilities are at a place where it’s part of their mix now.

Yvonne Prettner Solon: I just knew that once they committed that they could do it. It had been proven that it could work.

Mike Bull: What it showed us is that we know how to do more; we know how to do this.

Margaret Anderson Kelliher: You could see right away how many other states wanted to copy us. We passed a set of nation-leading bills both on renewable energy and the portfolio of bills that went with it.

Amy Koch: Minnesota really led the way.

Read the full bills online at: www.fresh-energy.org/2014/energy

Minnesota’s Growing Energy Economy

Employment Growth 2000–2014

Overall clean energy employment +78%

Minnesota total employment +11%

Clean Energy Jobs in 2014

NEARLY $11 BILLION INVESTED IN MINNESOTA CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS

$452 MILLION IN EARLY STAGE INVESTMENT 2004–2013

MORE THAN $50 MILLION IN WIND ENERGY PRODUCTION TAX PAID TO MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES 2004–2015

10 ENERGY MATTERS | VOLUME 29

www.FRESH-ENERGY.ORG 11

Industry and clean energy advocates at bill signing | Photo submitted by Bob Ambrose
Fresh Energy’s Power Circles recognize the leading individual, business, and organizational members who make generous unrestricted contributions of $1,000 and above each fiscal year.*

NEWTON CIRCLE: $10,000 OR MORE.

Aveda
Lang Family Foundation
Richard and Joyce McFarland
McKnight Foundation
Minnesota Environmental Fund
Sarah Sponheim
SunEdison
The David Winton Bell Foundation
The Pohlad Foundation
Mark and Kate Hanson

EDISON CIRCLE: $2,000–$4,999.

Donna W. Allan and Bill Mahlum
Randy and Bird Anderson
Anonymous (2)
Atomic Data
Charles Sumner Bird Foundation
Paul and Shannon Burke
David Chizek
Christine and Loren Danielson
Alan and Lollie Eidsness
Elmer L. & Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation
Fredrikson & Byron
Iberdrola Renewables
Ross and Bridget Levin
Dave and Sarah Lilja
M.A. Mortenson Construction
The Malcolm and Wendy McLean Fund
The Nash Foundation
Kate Wolford and Ed Reilly
James Uttley

TESLA CIRCLE: $1,000–$1,999.

Patricia Benn and Ned Crosby
Amy and Paul Biewen
Eric Blank and Nancy Printz
Terrance Brueck
Third Level Design
Joel and Alexandra Cannon
Carolyn Foundation
David and Kitty Crosby
Kim and Carol Culp
Charles Dayton and Sara Evans
Becky Erdahl
Nancy Gibson and Ron Sternal
H.B. Hayden Jr.
Kathleen Jones
John and Anita Kes
Lenfestey Family Foundation
David Leppik and Jordan Wood
Sarah Lynch
Jane Newman and Amy Lange
Duane Ninneman
Michael and Patsy Noble
Christopher O’Brien
Raj V. Rajan
Gary and Susan Rappaport

CURIE CIRCLE: $5,000–$9,999.

Campbell Foundation/Jim and Carmen Campbell
R. Michael and Sharon A. Conley
Wendy Bennett and Kendall Powell
Steven Leuthold Family Foundation
Shayna Berkowitz and Phyllis Wiener and Still Ain’t Satisfied, a Foundation with Attitude

* As of February 2015

Photos copyright Minnesota House of Representatives and Minnesota Senate