

# IS THE ERA OF LIMITED ENERGY OPTIONS IN MINNEAPOLIS OVER?

Until recently, Xcel Energy and CenterPoint Energy have been the only options for Minneapolis residents to receive electricity and gas. Coal is currently the largest portion of Xcel Energy's sources, while natural gas is the largest for CenterPoint Energy. The contract these energy companies have with the city of Minneapolis is coming to a halt in the next two years, and many are pushing to use this as an opportunity to shift to a new energy system.

The City of Minneapolis' Plan for Sustainable Growth is a leader in setting strict goals to ensure this energy transition. One of the largest sustainability indicators is to reduce city-wide carbon dioxide emissions by 30% by 2025. In 2010, the City of Minneapolis reported that energy used in buildings, mostly heating and cooling, accounted for 65% of its carbon emissions. Thus, the Minneapolis Climate Action Plan calls for a 10% increase in renewables, such as solar and wind, by 2025.



In addition to the City of Minneapolis, other organizations are taking grassroots approaches to reduce the city's dependence on coal and gas. One of the largest ones is Fresh Energy, a local planning organization that, along with many other non-profits, is attributed to helping pass the 2007 Minnesota Renewable Electricity Standard. They are also currently working to shut down the Sherco Coal Plant, the largest contributor of carbon emissions in Minnesota.

Another leader in this fight is Minneapolis Energy Options (MEO), an organization that seeks to expand Minneapolis' energy options beyond that of Xcel and Center Point to more local and renewable sources.

They are currently working with both those in charge of the current energy infrastructure and the City of Minneapolis to:

- Keep rates at or below their current levels;
- Maintain or improve energy reliability;
- Create a clear pathway to dramatic city-wide energy savings to reduce both costs and dependency on dirty energy; and
- Create a structure and system for greater community ownership, control, and economic benefit in our energy system.

In more recent news, MEO critiqued CenterPoint's decision to raise the basic residential charge by 87%, while dropping the delivery charge by 24%. As said by MEO's Executive Director of the group, "We are concerned that the rate filing does signal an effort by the company to create some potential disincentives for energy efficiency." By taking away the monetary savings customers obtain when using less energy, this decision would counter the fight many organizations are participating in to encourage energy efficiency financially for residents.



Looking forward, a consensus among all organizations is that there must be attention paid to both the sources of our energy, and efficiency to which we use our energy.

Source: <http://www.globalsiteplans.com/environmental-design/is-the-era-of-limited-energy-options-in-minneapolis-over/>