



JEFF SMITH

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR – 31ST DISTRICT



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 775
Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy
January 24, 2024

Chair Cowles and members of the committee, thank you for agreeing to hear this bill, and for giving me the opportunity to speak on its behalf.

Senate Bill 775 is one of twenty bills that were drafted to create good, family-supporting jobs, reduce inequality and help to combat climate change in Wisconsin. I'm not here today to debate over whether or not climate change is real.

I'm here to testify on the importance of this bill that will appropriate \$10,000,000 in general purpose revenue in each fiscal year of the 2023-25 fiscal biennium for the existing Energy Innovation Grant Program, EIGP which is administered by the Public Service Commission.

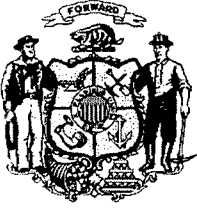
This program supports a wide variety of energy related projects that aim to reduce energy consumption as well as support renewable energy and energy storage.

Currently, there is a plethora of public entities that can apply for these grants through this program. They include: Municipalities, Universities, Schools, Hospitals, cities, villages, towns, counties, K-12 school districts, tribes, municipal water and wastewater utilities, municipal electric utilities, municipal natural gas utilities, electric cooperatives and others.

This bill will support the Office of Energy Innovation to increase the number of grants awarded, which will allow Wisconsin to transition to clean, renewable energy more rapidly. Each year, the PSC chooses eligible activities based on its energy priorities, emerging trends, and public input.

Climate change threatens our way of life in Wisconsin. From extreme weather, like polar vortexes, heatwaves, and hundred-year floods, to noticeable changes in our seasons and shorelines, people across our state are already coping with the effects of climate change. Low-income people, people of color, our state's farmers, and people in rural communities are especially impacted.

We can and must invest in policies that help us confront climate change. It's time to take action now to confront this threat facing Wisconsin families and businesses. It's time to invest in our shared future and move forward on this threat.



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson
Summer Strand, Commissioner

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Matt Sweeney

Public and External Affairs Director
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Chairman Cowles and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I'm here on behalf of our chairperson, Becky Valcq to express support of SB775. As you know, the Public Service Commission (PSC or Commission) is Wisconsin's independent utility regulator. It is the PSC's mission to ensure the delivery of safe, reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible utility services and equitable access to telecommunication and broadband services.

At the PSC, we house the Office of Energy Innovation (OEI) in the Division of Digital Access, Consumer, and Environmental Affairs. Since 2018, OEI has been successfully administering the Energy Innovation Grant Program (EIGP). Born out of a revolving loan fund from the 2009 American Rescue and Recovery Act that had run its course, the grant program has seen significant success in funding 141 innovative energy-related totaling \$32 million across the state.

The objective of the EIGP is to advance energy innovation in Wisconsin through:

- Investing in the adoption of innovative energy technologies and processes; and
- Expanding access to clean energy, efficiency, and preparedness to Wisconsin communities that are otherwise unable to adopt these and for whom these are innovative approaches.

EIGP supports innovation through a wide variety of energy projects related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy storage, microgrids, and energy planning. Eligible entities include manufacturers, municipalities of all sizes, K-12 school districts, tribes, municipal utilities, electric cooperatives, UW campuses and facilities, Technical Colleges, public or nonprofit hospitals, and 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

Projects like pairing energy storage with rooftop solar for Pierce Manufacturing in Appleton, replacing inefficient air compressors with high efficiency models and installing a heat recovery system at Stainless Foundry & Engineering in Milwaukee, improvements that increase the energy generated by its hydroelectric plant at Ahlstrom- Mosinee LLC in Marathon County, and in Bayfield County, with EIGP funding, we helped create a microgrid within the Bayfield County Courthouse and jail complex by installing a 60kW battery system and adding 23.4 kW of additional solar generation.

The grant program has provided benefit to the state, but its funding is running out. This year's grant round was funded with money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. After this round of grants, the funding will be all but depleted. We're currently accepting applications until March 1. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.