

## Environment and Energy Update

Posted by [John A. Knapp](#) on April 18, 2011

### Coal Moratorium Repeal Bill Passed Off Senate Floor

SF86, authored by Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont), was passed off the Senate floor on Thursday, April 14, on a bi-partisan 42 –18 vote. Sens. Marty, Torres Ray, and Dibble each offered amendments to the bill, all of which failed. The bill repeals the ban on new electric generation facilities or contracts with electric energy providers that would lead to increased carbon dioxide emissions. The ban was enacted as part of the 2007 Next Generation Energy Act. The companion bill, HF72, authored by Rep. Michael Beard (R-Shakopee), awaits action on the floor of the House. In comments Thursday, Gov. Dayton said he opposed the measure but he stopped short of threatening a veto.

### Dayton Issues Executive Orders on Energy and Environment

In another indication that Gov. Dayton intends to utilize his executive powers via executive orders to a greater degree than his predecessors, on April 8, the Governor issued three executive orders dealing with energy and the environment. Executive Order 11-12 directs state agencies to identify and make cost effective energy improvements in state facilities and sets a goal of a 20% reduction in state energy consumption. The state owns approximately 30 million square feet of space and new efficiencies resulting from the executive order are expected to result in millions of dollars in annual savings to the state. This new executive order also provides technical support to local governments and school districts to make their own energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements in their buildings.

Executive Order 11-13 directs state agencies to implement new practices and policy that reduce the environmental impact of state government operations. State agencies are directed to annually increase sustainability plans that identify specific measurable goals to include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, reducing waste disposal by 60% and other measures of sustainability. The sustainability effort is expected to cause state agencies to reduce pollution, use less energy, and reduce the use of petroleum fuels.

The third Executive Order, 11-14, renames the Office of Energy Security, housed within the Department of Commerce, to the Division of Energy Resources. The new name is intended to reflect a broader mission for the division to include planning and research around new energy facilities and transmission, the promotion of clean energy in the administration of low income and weatherization programs.

### Energy Policy Omnibus Bill Possible

House and Senate leaders on energy policy are in talks over a possible Omnibus Energy Bill. The House and Senate committees with energy jurisdiction heard multiple bills last week and laid many of them over

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for possible inclusion in the Omnibus Bill. One bill that was laid over attempts to analyze the cost impact on utility rates from complying with the state's renewable energy standard. HF1375, authored by Rep. Peggy Scott (R-Andover), is an effort to determine what utility rates would be if the renewable standards were no longer there. While the bill does garner bi-partisan support, in contention is the scope of what should be analyzed. Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) and the Service Employees International Union want the increased health costs from air pollution from non-renewable energy sources to be part of the analysis. Sen. Michelle Benson (R-Ham Lake) sponsors the companion, SF1093, which awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee.