Through advocacy at the Capitol, we secured $45M for Minnesota Climate Innovation Financial Authority (MNCIFA) to support Minnesotans in their transition to sustainable energy, with a focus on communities of color and Indigenous and low-income communities.

We hosted a Youth Climate Justice Summit with 135 young people from all over Minnesota to center the voices of the generation most impacted by climate disruption.

The Rise & Repair Lobby Day brought hundreds of Minnesotans (including young people!) to the Capitol to demand respect for Indigenous rights and climate justice.

Duluth and Twin Cities Policy Teams met throughout the year to identify places where Minnesotans can advocate for climate-centered policies on a local level.

We solicited more than 500 signatures to demand an environmental impact study to protect the Red Rock Ridge, a sacred space for the Lower Sioux and the site of the Jeffers Petroglyphs.

Our staff represented Minnesota at COP28, where we delivered a letter with more than 600 signatures demanding aggressive action on climate disruption.

We developed new solar proposals for 30 community groups across the state and helped 6 groups convert their buildings to solar (with many ready to go in 2024).

Because of the new incentives for solar-conversation in the Inflation Reduction Act, we hosted more than 10 events to educate Minnesotans on how individuals and community groups can access those financial incentives.

In partnership with Cooperative Energy Futures, we helped neighbors in Minneapolis to save money and invest in a sustainable future by signing up for the Midtown Solar Garden.

We hosted 3 webinars on heat pumps for more than 30 residents of Northern Minnesota, helping connect them to resources and contractors.

We worked with Solar United Neighbors, a solar cooperative, to put solar on nine homes in Northern Minnesota.

In our organizing work, we use the three-legged stool as a metaphor for how we make change — each of these is a critical approach in building towards a more just and sustainable world.

Tangible things we can do to end our fossil fuel dependence and care for each other and our world:

- We certified 26 Climate Justice Congregations, helping support their commitment to climate justice and provide education on practical things they can do.
- We spoke to over 40 congregations and did nine Song Circle events to help build our network of people passionate about climate justice.
- We hosted 4 webinars about the importance of reparations and tangible recommendations for action — 209 people were enrolled and the recordings were viewed more than 775 times.
- As a next step, we hosted two Reparations Learning Labs with 136 people enrolled.
- We participated in more than 20 networks and coalitions, including one with 5 organizations to develop a pilot resiliency network in the Phillips neighborhood.
- We hosted nine college interns and supported youth climate apprentices, six of whom graduated from college in 2023!
In 2023, Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light co-hosted the Headwaters Gathering with environmental and Indigenous leaders across the state to commemorate an important moment in protecting the health of our water and land. Two years previously, the ceremonious Fire Light Treaty encampment had held space over the Mississippi River and temporarily halted production on the Enbridge Line 3, a tar sands pipeline that crosses Northern Minnesota and endanger water sources, including the Mississippi river.

The Fire Light Encampment was not just about preserving the beauty and health of our state’s water, but also about the rights of Indigenous people to access the land and species they hold sacred: in the 1855 Treaty of Washington, the Anishinaabe people had ceded the land that Line 3 crosses to the U.S. government, but reserved the rights to hunt, fish, gather, and occupy the land for Anishinaabe people.

The Fire Light Encampment was by some measures unsuccessful — Enbridge completed Line 3 and put it into service in October 2021 — and the Headwaters Gathering held space for how devastating that defeat felt. Even still, many of those at the Headwaters Gathering pointed to the long-term successes for this movement. Eóin Small, who has worked alongside Indigenous-led movements, named many of the places where the movement saw success: a petition with 68,000 signatures, community activism at permitting meetings, cooperation across tribal nations and non-native people, and thousands of activists putting their bodies on the line. “We have to be aware of the other things that we’re fighting for in addition to what we’re fighting against,” he said.

The work around Line 3 has continued, and it will continue to change. Rather than preventing the construction, volunteers are now fighting to end its use and working to mitigate its harm. And many folks wondered what will we need to create the environmental change we want to see. “I am just trying to figure out what’s going to wake people up. The only thing I can think is, you have to come here. You have to be in this land, you have to see her, know her, hear her, and commune with her,” said Jami Gaither, co-founder of Waadookawaad Amikwag. “I wish I could help people see that if you love her, she will help you in your fight. She will give you every opportunity to help her. If you listen.”
The creation of the Minnesota Climate Innovation Finance Authority (MNCIFA) was a huge win for MNIPL – and for Minnesota’s sustainable energy future. MNCIFA will provide loans and educational resources for clean energy projects through an environmental justice lens, prioritizing Indigenous communities, communities of color, and people with lower incomes who are heavily affected by pollution.

This focus on addressing the harms of climate disruption through racial and Indigenous justice was intentional – as MNIPL’s Legislative Affairs Organizer Juventino Meza, J.D. put it, “The green economy is the new white economy, so for us it was important that there was embedded racial justice in the work.”

Legislative Director Patricia Torres Ray, Strategic Policy Director Sara Wolff, and Juventino spent months in conversation with community members, legislators, and administrators, addressing the concerns of small businesses, labor organizers, Indigenous communities and communities of color. “What mattered was engaging people in meaningful conversations,” Juventino said. “Once we sat down with people, even if we didn’t convince them, we were able to change the MNCIFA language to accommodate their concerns.”

When hundreds of folks showed up at the Capitol for the Rise & Repair rally to show their support for bold legislative action, they helped push the legislation to the finish line. In May of 2023, the Minnesota legislature passed the bill, allocating $45 million to transition into a new equitable green economy. Our work in 2024? Making sure those funds get into the hands of the Minnesotans who need them most.

Thank you to our Partners!

- Apadana Solar
- Avisen Legal
- Beth Zemsky
- Climate Generation
- Coalition to Dismantle the Discovery Doctrine
- Cooperative Energy Futures
- CURE
- EcoFaith Network
- Episcopal Church in Minnesota
- Friends of the Boundary Waters
- Go Solar Installs
- Institute for Local Self-Reliance
- Intermill Land History Consulting
- Jewish Community Action
- Land Stewardship Project
- Macalester Plymouth Congregational Church
- MCEA
- McKnight Foundation
- Mi C.A.S.A.
- Minnesota Environmental Justice Table
- Minnesota Multifaith Network
- Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Action
- MN350
- Mountains and Waters Alliance
- Prospect Park United Methodist Church
- R.I.S.E. Coalition
- Recycling Electronics for Climate Action
- Rise & Repair Alliance
- Shir Tikvah
- Sierra Club North Star Chapter
- Take Action MN
- The Center for Sustainable Justice
- The Ministry Lab
- The Repair Communities for Makoke Ikikcupi
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