

Environment & Energy

Governors Unveil Hydrogen Hub Plans for American Heartland

By Zach Bright

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- Four governors signed memorandum of understanding
 - Concept papers due to Energy Department by Nov. 7
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A regional hydrogen hub proposal that could produce cleaner energy for Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin was announced by state leaders on Wednesday.

Hydrogen fuel cells don't produce greenhouse gases, making them a clean energy alternative to cut down climate-warming emissions for the states' transportation, manufacturing, and agricultural industries.

"Clean hydrogen has the potential to play a key role in our clean energy efforts here in Wisconsin and across the country, and I'm proud to be working together with this bipartisan group of governors to do the right thing for our states' futures," Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers (D) said in a statement.

"By bringing together our expertise in agriculture and energy production, we can create a world-class hydrogen hub and do even more as states to feed and fuel the nation and the world," North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum (R) said in a statement.

The governors of the four states signed a memorandum of understanding outlining their plans.

Dubbed the Heartland Hydrogen Hub, the project is seeking a federal funding boost from a recently opened Department of Energy program that offers a \$7 billion pot of funding for up to 10 hydrogen hubs using dollars from last year's infrastructure law (Public Law 117-58).

New tax credits for hydrogen production are available under the federal tax and climate package signed in August (Public Law 117-169).

Two states from the Heartland project, Wisconsin and Minnesota, are also members of the Midwestern Hydrogen Coalition. The coalition includes six other Midwestern states that was announced in September. States were encouraged to participate in multiple proposals if deemed viable.

The Energy Department aims to fund at least four regional hubs—with at least one that produces “green” hydrogen from renewable energy, one that produces “blue” hydrogen using natural gas or carbon capture and storage, and one that produces “pink” hydrogen from nuclear power. The Heartland governors said only that their plan would “incorporate clean hydrogen projects from various sources of energy.”

Concept papers for the proposals are due to the Energy Department by Nov. 7, and applications are due by April 7, 2023.

The department hopes to select six to 10 hydrogen hubs to attain a nationwide goal of annually generating 10 million metric tons of hydrogen by 2030 and 20 million by 2040. It also aims to reduce the cost of clean hydrogen by 80% to \$1 per 1 kilogram in one decade.

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