

An aerial photograph of a farm in the Midwest, featuring several wind turbines, a red barn, and silos. The sky is filled with red concentric circles, suggesting a climate or energy theme. The text 'Accelerating climate action in the Midwestern United States' is overlaid in large white font.

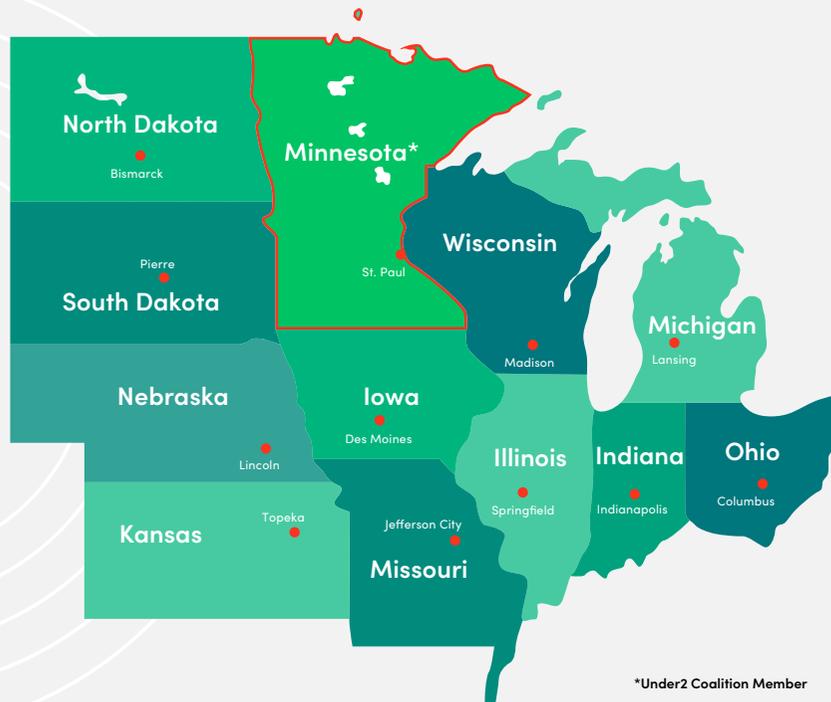
Accelerating climate action in the Midwestern United States

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UNDER **2**^o
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Climate action in the Midwestern US

The American Midwest is brimming with opportunity for climate action. The region is renowned for its agriculture and abundance of renewable resources, and many of its states are leading the climate fight forward. Despite its historic reliance on fossil fuels and industry influence, the Midwest has embraced the transition towards a low-carbon economy in key sectors. The time for climate-friendly agriculture, transport electrification, energy efficiency, renewable energy and more is now and the investment from Midwest states is evident.



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Midwest states have been leaders in the electric vehicle (EV) industry. Last year, state legislators boosted EV manufacturing, instituted road maintenance fees, and encouraged adoption of EV fleets and infrastructure. Five Midwestern states – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin – established the Regional Electric Vehicle Midwest Coalition to collaborate on the development of an equitable EV charging network that centers the needs of historically marginalized communities. This will help electrify transport, reduce carbon emissions, and create well-paid jobs.



Known as the industrial heartland of the US, the Midwest has a rich history of innovation and manufacturing that has been revitalized by the urgent need for clean transportation. As a result, the industry has grown to meet the demand for new materials and technology. This has made clean transportation jobs the fastest growing sector in the region.

“In 2020, over 677,900 Midwesterners were employed in the clean energy and vehicles sector, including 82,525 EV and hybrid auto workers”

With over two-thirds of the region designated as farmland, the Midwest is also a critical agricultural hub with significant potential for impact. Midwest farmers have already begun implementing sustainable farming techniques that improve the resilience and productivity of their lands while decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Agricultural climate solutions are crucial to ensuring food security, restoring ecosystems, and limiting climate change.



A snapshot of Midwestern states charging ahead

*Minnesota:

- Under the 2007 Next Generation Energy Act, Minnesota established targets to reduce GHG emissions 30% below 2005 levels by 2025 and 80% below 2005 levels by 2050.
- This legislation also created Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard, which requires electric utilities to achieve 25% renewable energy generation by 2025: a target that, according to utilities' projections, was met in 2018.
- In 2021, Governor Tim Walz proposed a series of policies that would bring the state to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2040, a decade earlier than his original 2019 target.



Wisconsin:

- In 2019, Governor Tony Evers created the Wisconsin Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy (OSCE) to explore potential pathways to a net zero state economy.
- The OSCE is currently developing the Wisconsin Clean Energy Plan which will provide a pathway to implement key strategies, covering agriculture, industry, buildings, electricity, transport, and environmental justice.
- The plan will put Wisconsin on a path for 100% carbon-free electricity consumption by 2050.



Michigan:

- In 2020, Michigan set a 2050 target to achieve economy-wide carbon neutrality and net negative GHG emissions thereafter.
- The state plans to achieve this commitment by:
 - creating infrastructure to accommodate two million EVs by 2030,
 - obtaining half of its electricity from renewables by 2030, and
 - eliminating coal-fired power by 2035.



Illinois:

- Last year, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act became law in the State of Illinois. This ground-breaking legislation is designed to help combat climate change, create reliable jobs, improve public health, and support the communities most impacted by climate change and pollution.
- Through this legislation, Illinois joins other states, including Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Wisconsin, California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington, many of which are Under2 Coalition member states, in setting 100 percent carbon-free or renewable electricity goals.



The power of Midwest states

Midwestern states have taken crucial steps towards slashing emissions, creating, health, economic, and environmental benefits for their communities. However, the ambition and pace of action needs to be scaled up.

“By harnessing the combined strength of our region’s prestigious research institutions, innovative businesses, governments, and ambitious community leaders, the Midwest will demonstrate the power of collective action to reduce carbon and build resiliency. Midwestern solutions will leverage our natural resources, our location in the heart of the country, and our leadership roles in agriculture and manufacturing for local and global impacts.”

Heather Navarro, Director, Midwest Climate Collaborative

“From shorter ice-fishing seasons to heavier rains that threaten our homes and businesses, climate change is challenging our way of life in Minnesota. Addressing climate change presents us with a historic opportunity to strengthen our economy, improve our health, and create a more equitable Minnesota for everyone. That’s why we are proud to be a member of the Under2 Coalition. As a longtime leader on climate action, Minnesota was the first Midwestern state to adopt clean car standards and has funded more than 3,600 miles of EV charging corridors. To build on this progress, Minnesota continues to focus on an economy powered by 100% clean energy with more energy efficient buildings, cleaner transportation and climate-smart natural and working lands. Minnesota understands that actions like these are truly a collaborative and cooperative effort, and coalitions like the Under2 Coalition help facilitate that collaboration.”

Craig McDonnell, Assistant Commissioner for Air and Climate Policy, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency



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Opportunities for impact

Significant progress has been made in the EV sector. However, in building decarbonization pathways, Midwest states should expand their renewable energy industries and tap into climate solutions in agriculture. And they don’t have to do this alone.



Transport



Renewable Energy



Agriculture

Through the **Under2 Coalition**, state and regional governments around the world have been pushing for greater collective and individual action to reach net zero emissions by 2050. For them, climate action is about pushing for ambitious targets that reflect the urgency of the moment, collaborating to share best practices and work through challenges, all whilst holding each other accountable.

The **Under2 Coalition** is made up of more than 270 governments, representing 50% of the world’s economy and 1.75 billion people.



1.75bn
people



50%
of the global
economy



270
governments



The road to net zero by 2050

By joining the [Under2 Coalition](#), Midwest states can learn from peer governments across the globe such as Emilia-Romagna in Italy. Like the Midwest, the Emilia-Romagna region is an agricultural hub with a legacy of manufacturing and heavy industry. To develop and implement their net zero target, Emilia Romagna participated alongside Minnesota in the Under2 Coalition's [Industry Transition Platform](#). The project brought together governments from highly industrialized regions to develop strategies to cut emissions while guaranteeing jobs, growth, and prosperity for their citizens.

Under2 Coalition members have reduced their emissions by 16%, on average, from their respective base levels. Additionally, [more than half](#) (55%) of members with a 2030 emissions reduction target are showing greater ambition than their national counterparts. They are setting the pace and paving the way for national and state governments.

The Midwest is not only renowned as the nation's manufacturing center, but also for its abundance of wind, sunlight, and agriculture. The region's unique features make it the optimal place to accelerate solutions in clean energy, transportation innovations, and sustainable agriculture. By joining the [Under2 Coalition](#), Midwest governments will have access to best practice recommendations, capacity-building opportunities, and accountability structures to support their transition to net zero, such as [Net Zero Futures](#), [ZEV Community](#), and [Decarbonization Pathways](#). With the help of the Under2 Coalition, states can embrace the opportunities unique to the region, and lead climate action in the US.



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Next Steps for Midwestern States

1 Commit to net zero by signing the [Under2 Coalition MOU](#) and join 270 state and regional governments worldwide in ambitious climate action

2 Complete the Under2 Coalition Ambition Tracker and regular CDP reporting to track your progress on climate action



3 Join thematic working groups and communities of practice focused on collaboration and innovation to address high emitting and hard to abate sectors

4 Set short-term [2030 targets](#) across various sectors

5 Exchange knowledge and experiences with peer governments across the US and internationally



About the Under2 Coalition

Climate Group is the Secretariat to the Under2 Coalition, a group of ambitious state and regional governments committed to keeping global temperature rises to well below 2°C. The Coalition has been named one of the international partnerships with the highest potential for emissions reduction – 3.3-3.9GtCO₂e/year in 2030 – more than the current annual emissions of the EU (Global Climate Action from Cities, Regions and Businesses Report, 2021).

Questions:

If you're interested in learning more about the Under2 Coalition, please contact Vartan Badalian, Government Affairs Manager, US & Canada at vbadalian@theclimategroup.org

