

## Minneapolis resolves to go dark for “Earth Hour” to raise awareness of global climate change

Written by

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The Minneapolis City Council Committee on Health, Energy and Environment last week approved a resolution to join the “Earth Hour” program for the second year. For one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 pm on Saturday, March 28, the City will turn off all uses of electricity in municipal buildings that are not required for life, safety or operations. The decorative lighting on the underside of the Stone Arch Bridge will be turned off for the night, and City Hall’s clock tower neon lights will be turned off as well.

According to the State of Minnesota, electricity use in the state accounts for 35 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global climate change. Participating individuals, businesses, governments and organizations around the world turn off their lights for one hour – Earth Hour – to make a global statement of concern about climate change and demonstrate their commitment to finding solutions.

“Even though it’s a symbolic call to action, Earth Hour had actual energy reduction results last year,” said Mayor R.T. Rybak, “It was a 10-percent drop – double what organizers had expected. This points to the good we can do for our environment if we practice energy conservation every day. As City government, there are many ways we’re working to be more green, but this is a great reminder that each of us can fight global climate change by making smart energy choices in our daily lives.”

“We’re very proud to participate in the Earth Hour effort for the second year running,” said City Council Member Scott Benson, who chairs the City Council’s Health, Energy and Environment Committee. “Raising awareness is another way we can help reduce our impact on the environment, in addition to our other initiatives. Last year we passed a new ordinance limiting vehicle idling in the city, we are using more and more renewable energy in our buildings and fleets, and we are making major infrastructure and planning improvements around better biking, walking and public transportation that allows our residents, workers and visitors to drive less.”

“By participating in Earth Hour and urging all businesses and members of the public to do the same, we’re sending a clear message that the people of Minneapolis are passionate about doing our part for the planet,” said City Council Member Cam Gordon, Vice Chair of the Health, Energy and Environment Committee. “We stand with the rest of the world in seeking solutions and acting immediately to take measures that will help fight global climate change.”

In 2009, organizers expect more than 1,000 cities in 100 countries to participate. In Minneapolis, in coordination with the City, 20 buildings are signed up already, from the Red Stag Supper Club to many of the tall lighted buildings downtown including IDS Center, Wells Fargo Center and Target headquarters. The list continues to grow. Volunteers have hosted fundraisers, passed out flyers and worked on various online social marketing efforts. Many employers are sending out notices to their employees. City leaders encourage businesses and individuals to participate and support the effort to fight climate change.

Earth Hour began in 2007 in Sydney, Australia. During Earth Hour 2008, more than 50 million people in 400 cities on all seven continents turned off their lights. Learn more, sign up and share your ideas at <http://www.earthhourUS.org> .

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The resolution to participate in Earth Hour will go before the full City Council March 27. To learn more about sustainable Minneapolis and find out how you can practice a more sustainable life, visit [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/sustainability) .