



Testimony to
North Carolina Utilities Commission
Asheville, North Carolina
July 27, 2022

My name is Sophie Loeb, and I'm here on behalf of the Center for Progressive Reform in support of significant amendments to Duke Energy's draft Carbon Plan. The Center is a nonprofit that harnesses the power of law and public policy to create a responsive government, a healthy environment, and a just society. We support the work of our coalition partners North Carolina Interfaith Power and Light which tirelessly fights for clean and affordable energy for all North Carolina residents.

As an incoming North Carolina resident, I am concerned about how the Duke Energy plan will negatively impact me and my future neighbors. Rising energy costs and environmental harm hurt us all, and I want to be proud of my home state for paving the way to a cleaner, greener, and more affordable energy future for all.

The Center recently launched the Campaign for Energy Justice to ensure:

1. Duke Energy adopts an affordable Carbon Plan that (a) meaningfully incorporates community input, and (b) leads to fair and affordable rates to increase energy security and;
2. The benefits of decarbonization and North Carolina's transition to a clean energy economy are passed on to all North Carolinians.

In its current iteration, the Carbon Plan fails to incorporate meaningful community impact and further causes economic burdens on underserved low-wealth communities.

Almost a million residential households served by Duke Energy qualify as low-income per federal poverty guidelines, with an estimated 231,165 low-income households meeting the company's stringent definition of "arrears struggling." As of May 2022, nearly 575,000 households were in arrears, owing more than \$213 million. Despite this data, the Carbon Plan itself lacks any targeted investments or solutions that would alleviate those affordability challenges or offset the exacerbating impacts of the proposed investments.

Further, the public engagement and outreach process for the Carbon Plan has also been far from transparent or equitable, especially for low-wealth ratepayers. Without adequate oversight and accountability from NCUC on the Carbon Plan, North Carolina's carbon reduction commitments under the Clean Energy Power Plan and House Bill 951 will likely not be fulfilled, leaving low-wealth ratepayers with the worst repercussions.

Consumer-owned generation is one solution to this problem. Consumer-owned generation of renewable energy is a key component in building community climate resilience. This can help customers decrease their energy bills and sell additional power to the grid. This helps decrease energy burdens, especially for low-wealth ratepayers. Such projects will also spur statewide economic development and increase jobs.

Now is the time for NCUC to act to ensure racial and economic equity and justice are centered meaningfully during every step of the process going forward. Duke Energy's Carbon Plan is a matter of both economic and racial justice – and getting it right will ultimately strengthen our state and nation.

For these reasons and many more, the Center urges the NCUC to provide additional oversight and require significant improvements to the Carbon Plan itself, while also creating space for greater input from the community that will be most impacted by the plan. To that end, the Center will be providing further detail on our recommendations via public comment as non-intervenors on the Carbon Plan docket.

Thank you for your time and consideration.