

Attachment:

May 11, 2023

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Governor of North Carolina
116 West Jones St.
Raleigh, NC 27603

cc. Attorney General Josh Stein
NC Utilities Commission Chair Charlotte Mitchell

Subject: Urgent request for transparency in surprise Duke Energy changes for commercial, nonprofit solar projects and your climate protection efforts

Dear Governor Cooper,

As you know, Duke Energy and other U.S. utilities have been attempting to suppress competition from rooftop solar power for many years.

Last year, 17 solar companies urged you to protect their industry from changes proposed by Duke Energy to residential net metering. Nearly 3,000 North Carolinians submitted public comments on the case to the NC Utilities Commission, a record public response. Despite these efforts and extensive arguments presented by a host of intervenors in the case, the commission refused to conduct an evidentiary proceeding before approving nearly all of Duke Energy's proposed changes on March 23. An appeal of the commission order is likely.

Meanwhile, the NCUC's order made a brief and cryptic reference to similar net energy metering changes that Duke Energy is quietly seeking to make for businesses, faith organizations, local governments and nonprofits. These changes would reduce the value of solar systems for those customers. Instead of seeking a full and open proceeding focusing on this extremely important issue, Duke Energy buried these changes deep in its ongoing rate-increase cases at the commission.

In fact, the information is so obscure that apparently none of the intervenors in the rate cases even noticed it, nor did Duke notify solar companies or other interested parties about the non-residential changes. What does seem clear is that Duke Energy would prefer to avoid the kind of scrutiny and long-running controversy caused by its residential net metering case.

Approximately 20 percent of all customer-owned solar in this state is located on businesses and nonprofit buildings such as schools, city halls and places of worship. New incentives under the Inflation Reduction Act will now make solar accessible to even more businesses and tax-exempt organizations. Duke Energy's efforts to reduce the

growth of solar would harm our solar industry and those seeking to adopt affordable, reliable solar power. Also, because solar power generated and stored on-site is the quickest and cheapest – and should be the most equitable – way to decarbonize this state, Duke Energy’s actions also harm your climate efforts at this time of great urgency. We hope you will agree that changes of such magnitude deserve and require an open and distinct public discussion and debate instead of being buried amid the myriad issues involved in the two rate cases, as currently planned. Making major changes without open scrutiny is no way to conduct business in North Carolina.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to use your relationship with the commission and with Duke Energy, your public voice and any official authority to call for a withdrawal of the proposed net metering restrictions from the current rate cases of both Duke Energy Carolinas and Duke Energy Progress.

We appreciate your attention and earliest possibly reply.

Sincerely,
Jim Warren
Executive Director

Also endorsing this letter:

350 Triangle
8MSolar LLC
Action for the Climate Emergency
Adicent Solar LLC
Alternative Power Sales & Rental, LLC
Beam Solar Co
Better Tomorrow Solar, Inc
Carrington Electric LLC
Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian Church
Clay Solar Installation Partners
CleanAire North Carolina
The Climate Reality Project,
Charlotte - Metro area
Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Covenant Solar and Roofing
Dogwood Alliance
Double A Farms of Shoals LLC
Down East Coal Ash Environmental and
Social Justice Coalition
Emerald Energy
Environmental Working Group
Firefly Solar
First Baptist Church West
Good Solar Organization
Grace Covenant Presbyterian Earth Team

Green Wave Solar
Greentech Renewables
Gritty Power, LLC
Hart's Sweets
Jubilee Home
Kehillah Synagogue
The Lilies Project
LuminaSun Smart Home, LLC
Medley Meadows Musical Farm
MPI Solar Solutions
NC Climate Justice Collective
NC Council of Churches
NC Interfaith Power & Light
NC Solar Now, Inc.
Olympus Home
Orka EV
Pamlico Solar LLC
Parkway United Church of Christ
Umstead Park United Church of Christ
Perfection Solar
Pittsboro Presbyterian Church,
Creation Justice Group
Protect All Children's Environment
Rebuilding Broken Places Community
Development Corporation
Renewable Energy Design Group
Resilient Solar Solutions
SCSP Solar
SmartSun Energy
SolarTyme
SolaTrue
SolarWise Energy Solutions, LLC
St. Thomas More Catholic Church
Stillwater Counsel, LLC
Stuller Power Solutions
Sundance Power Systems, Inc.
Sunrise Movement Charlotte
Sunrise Movement Durham Hub
Sunshine Saves Inc
Third Act North Carolina Working Group
Thor Jr Inc.
Titan Solar Power
U.S. Energy Solutions
Von Loor & Sloof Energy
West End Revitalization Association
Yes Solar Solutions