

1 PLACE: Via Videoconference
2 DATE: Wednesday, June 12, 2024
3 TIME: 6:48 p.m. - 7:33 p.m.
4 DOCKET: E-2, Sub 1318
5 EC-67, Sub 55
6 BEFORE: Chair Charlotte A. Mitchell
7 Commissioner Kimberly W. Duffley
8 Commissioner William M. Brawley
9 Commissioner Tommy Tucker

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12 IN THE MATTER OF:

13 In the Matter of Joint Application of
14 Duke Energy Progress, LLC, and North Carolina Electric
15 Membership Corporation for a Certificate of Public
16 Convenience and Necessity to Construct a 1360 MW
17 Natural Gas-Fueled Combined Cycle Electric Generating
18 Facility in Person County, North Carolina

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20 VOLUME 1
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1 A P P E A R A N C E S:

2 FOR THE DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC:

3 Jason Higginbotham, Esq.

4 Duke Energy Corporation

5 525 South Tryon Street

6 Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

7

8 FOR NORTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION:

9 Tim Dodge, Esq.

10 3400 Sumner Boulevard

11 Raleigh, North Carolina 27616

12

13 FOR THE USING AND CONSUMING PUBLIC:

14 William Freeman, Esq.

15 Public Staff - North Carolina Utilities Commission

16 4326 Mail Service Center

17 Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4326

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E X H I B I T S

IDENTIFIED / ADMITTED

No Exhibits of Record

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 CHAIR MITCHELL: Good evening. Let us come
3 to order and go on the record, please. I'm Charlotte
4 Mitchell, Chair of the North Carolina Utilities
5 Commission. With me tonight are Commissioners
6 Duffley, Brawley; and Commissioner Tucker is
7 attempting to join. I'm hoping he will join us
8 momentarily.

9 I now call for hearing Docket Number E-2,
10 Sub 1318 and EC-67, Sub 55, In the Matter of Joint
11 Application of Duke Energy Progress, LLC, and the
12 North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation for a
13 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to
14 Construct 1,360-Megawatt Natural Gas Fueled Combined
15 Cycle Electric Generating Facility in Person County,
16 North Carolina.

17 (Technological disruption)

18 Before we proceed further and as is required
19 by the State Government Ethics Act, I remind members
20 of the Commission of our duty to avoid conflicts of
21 interest, and inquire at this time as to whether any
22 Commissioner has a known conflict with respect to
23 matters coming before us in this docket?

24 (No response)

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 The record will reflect that no conflicts
2 have been identified, so we will proceed.

3 (Technological disruption)

4 Mr. McCoy would you -- thank you.

5 On March 28, 2024, Duke Energy Progress,
6 LLC, or DEP, and the North Carolina Electric
7 Membership Corporation, or NCEMC, NCEMC together with
8 DEP being referred to as the Joint Applicants, filed
9 with the Commission a Joint Application pursuant to
10 North Carolina General Statute § 62-82, 62-110.1, and
11 Commission Rule R8-61(b) for a Certificate of Public
12 Convenience and Necessity, or CPCN, to construct and
13 operate an advanced class combined cycle gas turbine
14 facility for the generation of electricity at the site
15 of its existing Roxboro plant in Person County, North
16 Carolina.

17 In support of the Application, the Joint
18 Applicants filed the direct testimony of five
19 witnesses, portions of which are confidential. The
20 Application explains that DEP will operate the
21 proposed facility and own approximately
22 1,135 megawatts of its capacity while NCEMC would own
23 the remaining approximate 225 megawatts.

24 The Application asserts the following:

1 First, placing the proposed facility into service by
2 January 1st, 2029, will enable DEP to permanently
3 retire Coal-Fired Units Number 1 and Number 4 at the
4 Roxboro site; second, siting the proposed facility
5 will allow for the efficient utilization of existing
6 plant infrastructure currently supporting Roxboro
7 Coal-Fired Units 1 and 4; third, connecting the
8 proposed facility to DEP's transmission network will
9 require limited transmission upgrades as shown by the
10 interconnection study processes undertaken on the
11 proposed facility; fourth, constructing the proposed
12 facility will provide DEP with generating capacity
13 that is more flexible than the Roxboro units with five
14 times their ramping ability, which is key to DEP's
15 balancing the variable operating characteristics of
16 renewable generation and ensuring system reliability.

17 The Application also provides the proposed
18 facility will rely on natural gas as fuel supply, is
19 hydrogen capable, and will utilize ultra-low sulfur
20 diesel stored on site as backup fuel.

21 The testimony accompanying the Application
22 discusses the Joint Applicants need for and cost of
23 the facility.

24 On April 10th, 2024, the Commission issued

1 an Order Scheduling Hearings, Establishing Procedural
2 and Filing Requirements, and Requiring Public Notice.
3 The Scheduling Order scheduled one public witness
4 hearing to be held remotely by way of WebEx on this
5 date and at this time, as well as a second public
6 witness hearing to be held in Person County tomorrow,
7 June 13th, 2024, beginning at 7:00 in the evening.
8 The Scheduling Order also scheduled an expert witness
9 hearing to begin immediately following the hearing in
10 Docket Number E-7, Sub 1297, which is scheduled to
11 begin immediately following the hearing in Docket
12 Number E-100, Sub 190, which is scheduled to begin at
13 2:00 in the afternoon on Monday July 22nd, 2024. If
14 the hearing on the Application is not concluded by
15 August 9th, 2024, the hearing will resume at 2:00 in
16 the afternoon on Tuesday September 3rd, 2024,
17 continuing as necessary until its conclusion.

18 In response to a motion filed on April 16th,
19 2024, the public notice requirement for NCEMC was
20 amended pursuant to an Order issued on April 17th,
21 2024 by the Commission.

22 On June 6th, 2024, DEC filed its Affidavits
23 of Publication confirming that public notice was
24 provided in accordance with the requirements of the

1 initial Scheduling Order.

2 On June 10th, 2024, NCEMC filed its
3 Affidavits of Publication confirming that public
4 notice was provided in accordance with the
5 requirements of the April 10th and the April 17th
6 Scheduling Orders.

7 The Public Staff, which represents the Using
8 and Consuming Public, has been made a party to this
9 proceeding in accordance with North Carolina General
10 Statute § 62-15(d). The Public Staff represents the
11 Using and Consuming Public and is in the process of
12 conducting an independent investigation of the
13 Application and will file its testimony setting forth
14 its recommendations to the Commission on June 20th,
15 2024.

16 In addition, the following parties have
17 petitioned to and been allowed to intervene in this
18 proceeding: The Carolina Industrial Group for Fair
19 Utility Rates II; the Carolina Utility Customers
20 Association, Incorporated; the Environmental Defense
21 Fund; and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy,
22 Sierra Club, and Natural Resources Defense Council.

23 That brings us to tonight.

24 The purpose of tonight's hearing is to hear

1 from DEP's and NCEMC's customers regarding their
2 concerns with the pending Application. Each public
3 witness that has registered in advance with
4 instructions in the Commission's Scheduling Order will
5 be given the opportunity to under oath should he or
6 she wish to do so.

7 In order to facilitate this remote hearing,
8 we'll use the following procedures: In conducting
9 this hearing, the Commission functions in a quasi
10 judicial capacity. We will follow for the most part
11 the North Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and Rules
12 of Evidence. Because the Commission is functioning as
13 a court, I cannot respond to your questions, rather we
14 are here to receive evidence from you-all in the form
15 of your testimony. In addition, for these reasons, if
16 you choose to testify tonight, you will be asked to
17 affirm the truthfulness of your testimony.

18 Public witnesses will appear by audio
19 connection only. Commissioners and counsel for the
20 parties will appear by video and audio connection.
21 Any public witness that wishes to view a live video of
22 the proceeding may access it by way of YouTube, which
23 is linked from the Commission's homepage; however, be
24 sure to mute your computer when you're called to

1 testify to avoid feedback. This hearing is being
2 transcribed by our court reporter and it's critical
3 that we limit all interference with her ability to
4 hear us and those of you who wish to testify.

5 Public witnesses will be called on in the --
6 to testify in the order in which they have called in.
7 When it's your turn to speak, the Webex administrator
8 will send you a request to unmute. You will hear the
9 message "You are being asked to unmute yourself. To
10 unmute, press *6." It's important that you listen for
11 this message. Once you unmute yourself, please state
12 your name to signify that you've been unmuted. At
13 that time, I will ask you to provide an affirmation as
14 to the truthfulness of your testimony and, once you
15 have provided that affirmation, the attorney for the
16 Public Staff will ask you a series of questions and
17 then you will be allowed to testify. To ensure that
18 all witnesses have an opportunity to participate
19 tonight, witnesses will be limited to three minutes to
20 testify.

21 Counsel for any party may ask questions of
22 the witnesses and, in addition, the Commission will
23 have an opportunity to ask questions. This means that
24 if you provide testimony, you may be asked questions

1 by attorneys or by Commissioners. However, just as a
2 quick reminder, the Commission and the attorneys for
3 the parties are not allowed to respond to your
4 questions during this hearing tonight.

5 With that, we will begin. I apologize to
6 those of you that we have kept waiting for your
7 opportunity to testify.

8 I ask now that counsel identify themselves
9 for the record, and we will begin with the Applicants.

10 MR. HIGGINBOTHAM: Good evening,
11 Commissioners, Jason Higginbotham appearing on behalf
12 of Duke Energy Progress.

13 MR. DODGE: Good evening, Chair Mitchell,
14 Members of the Commission, I'm Tim Dodge appearing on
15 behalf of North Carolina Electric Membership
16 Corporation.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: Public Staff?

18 MR. FREEMAN: Good evening. Thank you for
19 being here. I am Will Freeman with the Public Staff.
20 And just as a quick note, the Public Staff is here
21 representing, as the Chair said, all the members of
22 the Using and Consuming Public in this matter before
23 the North Carolina Utilities Commission, and we have
24 been reviewing the Joint Application that the Chair

1 described. We have a team of engineers, accountants
2 economists, and attorneys analyzing the Joint
3 Application. And, as the Chair said, we will be
4 filing on June 20th publicly our position, testimony
5 and exhibits. That will be available for your review
6 online.

7 The purpose of this hearing tonight is to
8 hear from customers like you. Your voice and
9 perspective are important. Each of you who indicated
10 that you wanted to make a statement will be called on.
11 If you are called on but no longer wish to make a
12 statement, please say that and we will move on to the
13 next witness. After you've been unmuted and sworn, I
14 will ask your name, the spelling of your name, your
15 address, and your electric provider, and then I will
16 ask you to give your evidence and statement to the
17 Commission. Your words will be made a part of the
18 official record of this proceeding, so please speak
19 slowly and carefully so that your information can be
20 taken down accurately. We appreciate all of you
21 attending this public hearing and thank you for your
22 patience. If, in the course of the hearing, you do
23 have any technical questions, you can ask me. We have
24 engineers attending who may be able to get an answer

1 quickly, otherwise, we can follow up after this
2 hearing with email. Thank you.

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Freeman.
4 Let me check in with the Applicants to see if they
5 have any remarks to make before we get started this
6 evening. Mr. Higginbotham?

7 MR. HIGGINBOTHAM: None on behalf of Duke
8 Energy Progress. Thank you, Chair Mitchell.

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Dodge?

10 MR. DODGE: None on behalf of NCEMC tonight.
11 Thank you, Chair Mitchell.

12 CHAIR MITCHELL: Okay. Well, with that,
13 let's go ahead and get started.

14 Mr. McCoy, would you please unmute the first
15 witness?

16 COMMISSIONER TUCKER: Chair Mitchell, I'm
17 here.

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right, Commissioner
19 Tucker, we hear you.

20 Mr. McCoy?

21 (Pause)

22 Have we got a witness that's ready to
23 testify?

24 MR. WENNBERG: This is Jeff Wennberg.

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JEFFREY WENNBERG;

having been duly affirmed,

testified as follows:

CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman, take it away.

MR. FREEMAN: Thank you.

DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

Q Mr. Wennberg, would you please spell your name, provide your address, and then tell us who your electric provider is?

A Yes. My name is Jeffrey Wennberg. J-E-F-F-R-E-Y W-E-N-N-B-E-R-G. I reside at 7015 Cedar Road in Sanford. And my electric utility is Duke Energy Progress.

Q Thank you. If you would please share with us your testimony.

A Thank you very much. And I want to thank the Utilities Commission for providing this opportunity to testify. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Physics and a Masters in Industrial Management. My pertinent past employment includes Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation for the State of Vermont and Senior Project Manager at the Center for Climate Strategies in Washington, DC.

1 I encourage the Commission's support of Duke
2 Energy Progress' Application for a Certificate of
3 Public Convenience and Necessity to construct a
4 1360-megawatt natural gas combined cycle electric
5 generating facility in Person County. I support
6 this proposal because it will achieve significant
7 GHD reductions faster than any alternative. It
8 will enhance North Carolina's grid stability and
9 resilience and it will do so at the lowest cost
10 to the ratepayers.

11 The U.S. power sector emissions dropped from
12 41 percent between 2007 and 2023, while
13 electricity demand and production increased by
14 6 percent. Coal-fired generation dropped from
15 50 percent to 17 percent nationally, while wind
16 and solar generation increased from 1 to
17 15 percent. At the same time, natural gas
18 increased from 19 percent to 42 percent. This
19 dramatic reduction in emissions was largely the
20 result of fuel switching to natural gas.

21 Duke Energy Progress proposes to replace two
22 coal units with two advanced natural gas-fired
23 units at the same site by the end of the decade.
24 Wind and solar must be sited where the energy

1 resource is economically viable requiring new
2 transmission lines and related facilities. Even
3 if these energy resource locations were
4 identified today, a notion that 1.36 gigawatts of
5 new wind and solar generation could be available
6 to the grid within six years is unrealistic.

7 Finally, contrary to the advertising
8 campaign being waged against this proposal,
9 renewable generation is not less expensive than
10 natural gas with the ratepayers. The 10 states
11 with the highest percentage of non-hydro
12 renewable generation have average electric rates,
13 higher than the U.S. average, and substantially
14 higher than North Carolina. Specifically, the
15 top 10 renewable states' average residential rate
16 is 23 percent higher than North Carolina,
17 commercial rates are 28 percent higher, and
18 industrial rates are 34 percent higher. This is
19 consistent with my prior work with the Center for
20 Climate Strategy.

21 In most cases, the renewable portfolio
22 standard proposal cost jobs, reduce disposable
23 income and depress the jurisdiction's domestic
24 product. At the national level, the RPS was

1 projected to result in a net 10-year loss of
2 58,600 jobs and 35.5 billion in gross domestic
3 products. By contrast, the clean energy
4 standard, which limits emissions as opposed to
5 mandating specific generation technologies,
6 resulted in employment income and GSP growth.
7 North Carolina has neither an RPS nor a CES, but
8 the approved Carbon Plan, which by the way this
9 proposal from Duke Energy Progress is consistent
10 with, the approved Carbon Plan functions
11 essentially as a clean energy standard. The goal
12 should be to reduce GHG emissions, not favor or
13 mandate a particular technology or industry.
14 Duke Energy's proposal fully supports that and
15 will do so without jeopardizing grid reliability
16 and at an affordable cost to the ratepayers, and
17 much more quickly than any alternative could
18 achieve.

19 Again, I thank you for the opportunity.

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Wennberg.
21 Let me see if there are questions for you from counsel
22 for any of the parties.

23 MR. FREEMAN: No questions.

24 MR. HIGGINBOTHAM: No questions.

1 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions from
2 Commissioners?

3 (No response)

4 Mr. Wennberg, there are no questions for you
5 tonight. We appreciate you being here with us. Thank
6 you for your testimony.

7 MR. WENNBERG: Thank you very much for the
8 opportunity.

9 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, Let's move on to
10 the next witness, please.

11 MR. MCCOY: Caller, are you there?

12 MR. HELSEL: Yes. This is Adam Helsel. Can
13 y'all hear me?

14 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Helsel, we can hear
15 you.

16 ADAM HELSEL;
17 having been duly affirmed,
18 testified as follows:

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: You may proceed,
20 Mr. Freeman.

21 MR. FREEMAN: Thank you.

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

23 Q Mr. Helsel, if you could please spell your name,
24 and provide your address, and tell us your

1 electric service provider.

2 A Yes. Sorry. The Webex overdid that -- was
3 talking while you were talking, but if I remember
4 correctly. My name is Adam Helsel, A-D-A-M
5 H-E-L-S-E-L. I live at 2413 Lake Wheeler Road in
6 Raleigh, North Carolina. My electric service
7 provider is Duke Energy Progress.

8 Q Thank you for that. If you could please provide
9 us with your testimony.

10 A Yes. I just wanted to speak in favor of the
11 project. So I agree completely with what the
12 first speaker said. And I have a background in
13 chemical engineering and material science
14 engineering. I have my PE license in chemical
15 engineering. And while I cannot speak for my
16 company, I am the ESG representative for my
17 company, and we believe in what President
18 Obama's -- it's not an official statement from my
19 employer and I'm not mentioning my employer's
20 name, but we believe in what the Blue Ribbon
21 Energy Commission said. Again, that is all of
22 the above strategy, greenhouse gas reduction;
23 utilizing a combined cycle plant is an excellent
24 stopgap measure until we can move on to more

1 reliable sources like nuclear energy or develop
2 battery storage to support renewables. But in my
3 opinion as an engineer in the current time frame
4 that we are looking at, this is probably the best
5 option because it gets us to greenhouse gas
6 reduction quicker and it provides a substantial
7 greenhouse gas reduction.

8 So, I would just like to advocate for this
9 project and I would also like to say if there are
10 decenters to this, there is a mechanism for
11 supporting renewable energy in North Carolina
12 that I actually personally subscribe to. It's
13 called NC Green Power. So I actually purchase
14 blocks of renewable energy. So that is a
15 capitalist way of moving the pendulum to that
16 side. And people are more than welcome to sign
17 up for that if they want to support renewable
18 energy. And if that has not taken significant
19 hold, then we are being told by the market that
20 solutions like this are probably going to be the
21 best option until we can build out nuclear and
22 other advanced energy options. So, that's all I
23 have to say about that.

24 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Helsel, let me see if

1 there are questions for you from counsel.

2 MR. FREEMAN: No questions.

3 CHAIR MITCHELL: Commissioners, any
4 questions?

5 (No response)

6 Mr. Helsel, we appreciate your being here
7 with us tonight. Thank you very much for your
8 testimony, sir.

9 MR. HELSEL: Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, you may unmute
11 the next witness.

12 MS. PATERSON: Hello.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Would you let us know your
14 name, please, ma'am?

15 MS. PATERSON: This is Sharon Paterson.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: Ms. Paterson.

17 SHARON PATERSON;

18 having been duly affirmed,

19 testified as follows:

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman, you may take
21 it away.

22 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

23 Q Ms. Paterson, would you please spell your name,
24 let us know your address, and tell us your

1 electric provider?

2 A My name is spelled S-H-A-R-O-N P-A-T-E-R-S-O-N.
3 My address is 2084 Weston Green Loop in Cary,
4 North Carolina, and my electric provider is Duke
5 Energy.

6 Q Thank you. If you could please tell us your
7 testimony.

8 A Certainly. As I said, my name is Sharon Paterson
9 and I'm a residents of Cary, North Carolina, a
10 customer of Duke Energy, and I'm also a Director
11 at MIQ, a nonprofit whose name MIQ is shorthand
12 for Methane Intelligence.

13 I want to thank you very much for this
14 opportunity to speak with you this evening. I
15 assume that some of the testimony you may hear
16 will be from environmentalists who would prefer
17 that Duke Energy be building more renewable power
18 instead of more fossil fuel-powered electric
19 generation. But while I'm not here to speak
20 about the choice between renewable versus fossil
21 fuel, I am here to talk about how to implement
22 fossil fuel plants in a way that keeps greenhouse
23 gas emissions to a minimum.

24 I would like to tell you about an

1 opportunity that Duke has to operate their new
2 gas-fired power plant, should it be approved, in
3 a very environmentally friendly way. MIQ is a
4 certifying body that provides performance
5 standards for the natural gas supply chain and
6 ends up lowering methane emissions. To date, we
7 have certified over 20 percent of the natural gas
8 production in the United States. Natural gas
9 that is certified to 0.05 percent methane
10 intensity, also known as Grade A gas, in the
11 production sector of the gas supply chain is
12 plentiful and easily available in our state.
13 This figure, 0.05 percent is 95 percent lower
14 than the national average.

15 What that means is this: A 1360-megawatt
16 combined cycle gas turbine plant, such as what
17 Duke and the joint -- their partners are
18 proposing operating at an assumed 60 percent
19 efficiency, will first roughly 67,749,000 MMBtu
20 of gas per year. If that gas were certified
21 Grade A gas or 0.05 percent methane intensity, it
22 would reduce the atmospheric methane by over
23 11,200 metric tons compared with uncertified gas.
24 This is the equivalent of about 207,700

1 gasoline-powered cars driven for one year. North
2 Carolina has nearly 3.3 million cars registered,
3 so it would be like taking 16 percent of all the
4 cars off the road in North Carolina each year.
5 You might think that kind of significant methane
6 reduction could be expensive, but at current
7 premiums for certified gas, the cost per
8 household would only be about six cents per
9 month. And that's over and above any methane
10 reductions that would be achieved by switching
11 from coal to gas generation.

12 As a resident of North Carolina, I would
13 like to see our state pursue a rapid reduction in
14 greenhouse gases. From my personal point of
15 view, I would recommend that the approval of the
16 proposed gas plant be conditional on Duke
17 supplying the facility with only certified gas to
18 assure that the greenhouse gas is associated with
19 the life cycle of the facility be as low as
20 possible.

21 I invite you to contact me for any further
22 information about certified gas and I thank you
23 very much for this opportunity to speak to you
24 today.

1 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Ms. Paterson.
2 Let me see if there are questions for you from the
3 counsel for the parties.

4 MR. FREEMAN: (Shakes head no).

5 MR. HIGGINBOTHAM: (Shakes head no).

6 MR. DODGE: (Shakes head no).

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: There are no questions from
8 counsel. Commissioners, any questions?

9 (No response)

10 Ms. Paterson, we thank you very much for
11 your testimony tonight. Appreciate your time.

12 MS. PATERSON: Thank you.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, next witness,
14 please.

15 MR. WELLS: Hi. This is Sean Wells.

16 SEAN WELLS;
17 having been duly affirmed,
18 testified as follows:

19 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman, you may take
20 it away.

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

22 Q Sean Wells, if you could please spell your name,
23 give us your address, and then tell us your
24 electric provider.

1 A Sure thing. My name is Sean Wells, spelled
2 S-E-A-N W-E-L-L-S. My address is 8908 Freewynn
3 Way (spelling uncertain), in Raleigh, North
4 Carolina 27613. My provider is Duke Energy
5 Progress.

6 Q Thank you. If you could please share your
7 testimony with us.

8 A Sure thing. So, in general, I guess I'm not
9 super familiar with how these gas-fired turbine
10 generators work. I'm not really that sort of
11 engineer, rather I'm a major in computer science
12 and I work in the financial industry. So,
13 although I can't really give financial advice,
14 you know, I can give a different perspective
15 instead.

16 I know going over some of the information
17 over the past few months, since this recent
18 proposal, it started to make me believe that this
19 might be a short-term solution that's
20 masquerading as a long-term solution. You know,
21 in the financial services industry, it's really
22 important to be planning long-term and trying to
23 find the best solution for retirement. And this
24 proposal here, it assumes that the technology is

1 able to materialize by 2050, it assumes that a
2 market is going to materialize, and it assumes
3 that it's going to be economical and
4 cost-effective.

5 And again, in my line of work, these many
6 assumptions will cause a loss of billions of
7 dollars. I think, if I recall, I saw a statistic
8 that said that Duke would be able to convert
9 3 percent of the hydrogen gas by 2035 and would
10 be able to hit a 100 percent by 2050, and I
11 really feel like that is a bold prediction. I
12 feel like it is possible but again it's an
13 assumption that has not been fully proven out
14 yet.

15 I would like the Commissioners and the Board
16 to please reconsider and reevaluate some of this
17 information. Thank you for your time.

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Wells, let me see in
19 there are questions for you from counsel.

20 (No response)

21 No questions. Questions from the
22 Commissioners?

23 (No response)

24 Not hearing any questions. Mr. Wells, we

1 appreciate your time tonight. Thank you for being
2 with us.

3 Mr. McCoy, next witness, please.

4 MR. LEGERTON: Yes, I'm here.

5 CHAIR MITCHELL: Would you let us know your
6 name, please, sir?

7 MR. LEGERTON: Spell it?

8 CHAIR MITCHELL: Tell us --

9 MR. LEGERTON: Did you say spell it?

10 CHAIR MITCHELL: Tell us your name, please.

11 MR. LEGERTON: It's Reverend Mac Legerton.

12 M-A-C --

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Legerton.

14 MR. LEGERTON: L-E-G-E-R-T-O-N.

15 MAC LEGERTON;

16 having been duly affirmed,

17 testified as follows:

18 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman, you may take
19 it away.

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

21 Q Reverend, if you could please spell your name,
22 tell us your address, and tell us your electric
23 provider.

24 A It's M-A-C, last name L-E-G-E-R-T-O-N. My

1 address is P.O. Box 9 in Pembroke, North
2 Carolina. My provider is Lumbee River EMC.

3 Q If you could please share your testimony with us.

4 A Yes. I'm opposed to the granting of a
5 Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
6 for the methane gas-powered facility in Person
7 County. I'm opposed because it is neither
8 convenient nor necessity for the public in order
9 to meet the increasing demand for electricity in
10 our state.

11 If Duke Energy would rapidly shift to clean
12 renewable energy, there are ways to do so that
13 will make renewable energy much cheaper than
14 methane gas and nuclear production. Making it
15 cheaper is a matter of will, not skill. Methane
16 gas and nuclear energy are highly expensive,
17 unclean, dangerous, and harmful sources of
18 electricity. What is a public convenience and
19 necessity is to shift as rapidly as possible to
20 clean renewable energy sources.

21 Methane gas mistakenly called natural gas is
22 on its way out of Commission in a very short
23 while for the same reasons that coal is now on
24 its way out. The utility companies know this but

1 they want to construct as many methane gas and
2 nuclear facilities at a high cost to ratepayers
3 before the public wakes up and realizes that
4 clean renewable energy can be cheaper, and is
5 more reliable, more abundant, more economically
6 sustainable, cleaner, safer, and less harmful.
7 It will be community states and nations that make
8 this rapid shift. It will be the most
9 economically secure and independent from the
10 rising costs and harms caused by the continued
11 use, much less the expansion of methane gas and
12 nuclear energy production.

13 It is the responsibility of the North
14 Carolina Utilities Commission to fully inform
15 ratepayers of the impacts of all proposed
16 approaches to energy production. NCUC needs to
17 require Duke Energy to inform the public of where
18 all of its proposed methane gas and nuclear
19 facilities are projected to be sited, and their
20 full economic and social cost to ratepayers are
21 documented. Then, and only then, will the public
22 know and feel the full impact of this tragedy and
23 travesty of the unnecessary economic human,
24 environmental, and climate costs of what is being

1 planned as our future in North Carolina. We need
2 to be fully informed right now and not in the
3 piecemeal fashion of what these unnecessary
4 projects are being rolled out for Duke Energy's
5 benefit and at the expense of all of us in the
6 public. Thank you.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Thank you, Mr. Legerton.
8 Let me see if there are questions for you from counsel
9 for the parties.

10 MR. FREEMAN: No questions.

11 MR. HIGGINBOTHAM: No questions.

12 MR. DODGE: No questions.

13 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions from
14 Commissioners?

15 (No response)

16 There are no questions from Commissioners.
17 So Mr. Legerton, we appreciate your coming out tonight
18 and your providing testimony to us.

19 MR. LEGERTON: Thank you.

20 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, you may unmute
21 the next witness, please.

22 MR. ROLLINS: Yes I'm Alonzo Rollins.

23 ALONZO ROLLINS;

24 having been duly affirmed,

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 testified as follows:

2 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman.

3 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

4 Q If you could please spell your name, give us your
5 address, and tell us your electric service
6 provider.

7 A Alonzo Rollins, 110 Leona Avenue, and my provider
8 is Duke Energy.

9 Q And could you please spell your name for us?

10 A A-L-O-Z-O R-O-L-L-I-N-S.

11 Q Thank you. If you could please provide your
12 testimony.

13 A Yes. You know, I'm here speaking this evening --
14 I actually also have a reside up in a community
15 by the name of Stovall, North Carolina, which is
16 a neighboring county to Person County. You know
17 I, myself, am speaking this evening with the
18 concern of actually having been a victim of big
19 company profit down here in Cumberland County.
20 And for right now, I stated as a victim with this
21 PFAS chemical. Not actually a GenX do we have an
22 affect by, but our groundwater did wound up being
23 affected by a PFAS chemical. And I never thought
24 that, you know, we would actually have to be a

1 part of anything like that. I heard about GenX
2 years ago when it first came out in the news and
3 I just didn't think we would be a part of it but
4 we wound up being a part of it.

5 And so I called in this evening, you know,
6 not really knowing a whole lot about the burning
7 of natural gas to turn turbines to generate
8 electricity. I did come across information as to
9 where, just second to burning coal with the
10 production of coal ash, does the burning of
11 natural gas fall second. This is information
12 that I came across just really trying to Google
13 information to understand the burning of natural
14 gas to turn turbines to producing electricity.

15 So, you know, I definitely hope, and I do
16 appreciate this evening, actually, you know,
17 getting this flyer in the mail that actually
18 alerted me to this conversion of coal ash plants
19 up in Person County now being -- trying to
20 convert to burning natural gas to produce
21 electricity. I mean, you know when it came to
22 the awakening of us being affected by PFAS here
23 in North Carolina, down in Cumberland County, I
24 never got anything from anybody in the mail that

1 we possibly could be affected. It just happened
2 to be word of mouth, you know, that I actually
3 came across this awakening of us actually being
4 affected by this -- this PFAS, this chemical, you
5 know, all behind, you know, the profit of the big
6 company profits.

7 It was just really, really, really a lot to
8 deal with it because right now, you know, it's a
9 natural resource that we've lost.

10 Q Mr. Ross, if we could -- I understand the PFAS,
11 but just to -- if you can speak a little more on
12 the topic of the Person County, Roxboro, new
13 power plant, if you don't mind.

14 A Yes. So now, like I say, I actually have a
15 reside up around the community of Stovall, North
16 Carolina, which is neighboring to Person County.
17 So I do have this concern, you know. And I hope
18 to be continually informed, you know, to try to
19 best understand what it is that I now may be
20 affected by, you know, with being a neighbor to
21 this conversion of coal ash burning facilities to
22 natural gas burning facilities. Because, you
23 know, this is an opportunity for me up in that
24 reside of -- or that community of Stovall that

1 I'm really hoping is the location to be able to
2 breathe some clean air and drink some clean water
3 you know and right now, you know, this is what I
4 could possibly be faced with. But like I say,
5 I'm really trying to have an opportunity to best
6 understand what you're doing here with burning
7 this natural gas in order to turn turbines.

8 So, you know, I really hope that -- like I
9 said, I got this flyer from Duke Energy. I
10 really hope that as this goes on that you can
11 continue to try to reach out to persons to have
12 them to be aware of what it is that's going on
13 around them, to try and best understand what's
14 being done, because you know, to be backed in a
15 corner again, to find out that you're literally
16 being a victim, you know of the environment like
17 this here is just not a good feeling. It's just
18 not a good feeling. So I hope that everybody can
19 really understand where it is that I'm coming
20 from this evening here and my concern of having
21 received this information from Duke Energy about
22 these conversions of coal ash plants. Because I
23 now only look to do business burning natural gas
24 which is only -- like I say, which I've got an

1 understanding is only second to the burning of
2 coal to produce this electricity.

3 Q Thank you, Mr. Rollins.

4 A So I thank you.

5 Q Thank you very much.

6 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Rollins, we appreciate
7 your comments tonight. Let me see if there are
8 questions for you from counsel.

9 Counsel, any questions for the witness?

10 (No response)

11 Commissioners, questions for the witness?

12 (No response)

13 All right, Mr. Rollins, there are no
14 questions for you tonight. We appreciate your being
15 here with us. Thank you for your testimony.

16 MR. ROLLINS: Thank you.

17 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, please unmute
18 the next witness.

19 MS. CARTER: This is Michelle Carter.

20 MICHELLE CARTER;
21 having been duly affirmed,
22 testified as follows:

23 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. Freeman.

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION BY MR. FREEMAN:

1 Q Michelle Carter, could you please spell your
2 name, give us your address, and tell us your
3 electric provider? Thank you.

4 A Yes. My name is Michelle, spelled
5 M-I-C-H-E-L-L-E. Last name is Carter, spelled
6 C-A-R-T-E-R. My address is 112 Snow, S-N-O-W
7 Crest C-R-E-S-T Trail T-R-A-I-L, and that's in
8 Durham, North Carolina, zip code 27707, and I am
9 a Duke Energy customer.

10 Q Thank you very much. If you could please share
11 your testimony with us.

12 A Thank you so much. And thank you to the
13 Utilities Commission for allowing me back to
14 speak today.

15 My name is Michelle Carter and I'm the Clean
16 Energy Campaign Director at the North Carolina
17 League of Conservation Voters. I'm speaking
18 today to oppose the proposed methane gas plant in
19 Person County, North Carolina.

20 Growing up in southern California, I have
21 early memories of the oil and gas industry's
22 activities throughout my home state. Long Beach,
23 California is an hour from rural home town and
24 it's home to one of the largest domestic oil

1 fields in the continental United States.
2 Abandoned oil wells litter parking lots and green
3 spaces directly harming the communities like mine
4 living in these areas. Long Beach suffers from
5 water and air contamination, abandoned
6 infrastructure, and continual gas leaks from
7 these forsaken wells.

8 While North Carolina is not a production
9 state, Duke and Dominion Energy are proposing one
10 of the largest gas infrastructure buildup in the
11 entire United States. Between methane gas
12 pipelines, gas storage facilities, and gas
13 combustion plants, proposals for new gas,
14 transportation, and combustion will bring the
15 same pollution and harm to North Carolinians that
16 I have seen my entire life.

17 Duke Energy's proposal to construct a gas
18 plant where a coal plant has released pollutants
19 for decades is irresponsible and expensive.
20 Studies have shown that 99 percent of new gas
21 plants are more expensive than constructing
22 renewables in these same areas. Furthermore, EPA
23 Section 111 rules will double the cost per
24 megawatt of these gas plants forcing ratepayers

1 into unwanted monthly costs. Methane gas is not
2 the least cost solution but instead provides more
3 profit for Duke Energy shareholders.

4 Our state has already dealt with the legacy
5 of coal ash for decades and will now be faced
6 with the consequences of pipeline leakage. There
7 is a gas leak from a methane pipeline once every
8 40 hours on average in the United States. And
9 there are zero pipelines that have never leaked.
10 Methane gas is colorless and odorless, further
11 exposing residents in the nearby area to unknown
12 harm.

13 As a working professional in the energy
14 sector, I do understand the existing transmission
15 infrastructure to keep costs down and to reduce
16 the time that new generation needs to be
17 interconnected to the grid. However, I question
18 why solar and battery storage cannot be built
19 here and use that infrastructure instead
20 providing a reprieve for residents from that
21 pollution and increasing the number of
22 sustainable jobs for their residents of Person
23 County.

24 North Carolina is the number one state for

1 rural clean energy jobs in the nation. By
2 refusing to site renewable energy here, the
3 Utilities Commission will submit Person County
4 into additional decades of the reliance on fossil
5 fuel economy and the negative health impacts that
6 come with it. Between tax credits and point of
7 sale rebates, the Inflation Reduction Act offers
8 our state the best possible chance to cut our
9 dependence on fossil fuels. Methane gas is not a
10 bridge fuel to a clean energy economy when the
11 technology we need is available now and it's more
12 affordable than ever.

13 Thank you for your time and consideration.
14 And I once again urge the Commission to deny this
15 application.

16 CHAIR MITCHELL: All right, Ms. Carter. Let
17 me see if there are questions for you from counsel for
18 the parties.

19 MR. FREEMAN: No questions.

20 MR. DODGE: No questions.

21 CHAIR MITCHELL: Questions from
22 Commissioners?

23 (No response)

24 Ms. Carter, there are no questions for you

NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

1 tonight. We appreciate your testimony. Thank you for
2 being with us.

3 MS. CARTER: Thank you.

4 CHAIR MITCHELL: Mr. McCoy, if you would
5 unmute the next witness, please, sir.

6 MR. MCCOY: That is all of the callers.

7 CHAIR MITCHELL: Well, it looks like we have
8 come to the end of our list of registrants,
9 participants this evening. With that, we will be
10 adjourned. Thank you very much, everybody.

11 (The proceedings were adjourned)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, KIM T. MITCHELL, do hereby certify that the Proceedings in the above-captioned matter were taken before me, that I did report in stenographic shorthand the Proceedings set forth herein, and the foregoing pages are a true and correct transcription to the best of my ability.

Kim T. Mitchell
Kim T. Mitchell

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