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May 4, 2023

North Carolina Utilities Commission
ATTN: Ms. A. Shonta Dunston, Chief Clerk
4325 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4300

May 09 2023

Re: Docket No. E-2 Sub 1311: Proposed 9.5 MW Solar Facility in Buncombe County

Dear Ms. Dunston,

As an environmental advocacy non-profit that champions renewable energy solutions in Western North Carolina, MountainTrue enthusiastically supports Duke Energy's proposal to build the Asheville Solar Facility at the site of Duke Energy's Asheville Power Plant. This 9.5 megawatt solar facility will be the largest in Western North Carolina and is a critical part of Duke's commitment to the Western Carolinas Modernization Plan. With this installation, Duke Energy will reach its commitment of 15 megawatts of solar within the DEP-West region of North Carolina. The project is in direct service of Buncombe County's resolution to use 100% renewable energy by 2030, Governor Cooper's Executive Order 80 to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions at least 40% below 2005 levels by 2025, and the goal set in HB 951 directing a 70% reduction in carbon emission by the year 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

As an organization with decades of land use planning experience, we also applaud the project's initiative to convert a brownfield development on a former coal-fired generation site to renewable energy. Given the mountainous terrain and high cost of land in Buncombe County, it is critical to incorporate creative land use solutions in our transition to renewable energy. Building this project on this site facilitates a larger facility with access to existing transmission lines, adding more solar to the grid while preserving other land for tree canopy, affordable housing and other high-demand needs for Western North Carolina's communities and climate. It is not adjacent to residential uses and does not require significant tree clearing to build.

We hope that this will be one of many such initiatives for solar energy projects as our region moves away from fossil fuels and toward a renewable energy future.

Sincerely,

Gray Jernigan, Deputy Director & General Counsel