



North Carolina General Assembly
House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN AUTRY
100TH DISTRICT

Appropriations
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Commerce
Homeland Security, Military and Veteran
Affairs
Local Government

March 3, 2021

N.C. Utilities Commission
Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC 27603-5918

**RE: Docket E-100, Sub 165, 2020 Integrated Resource Plans Supporting
an order to close all coal-burning power plants in North Carolina by 2030**

Dear Commissioners,

We, the undersigned leaders and elected officials, **urge the Commission to require Duke Energy to retire its coal-burning power plants by 2030 and replace them with clean energy.**

Specifically, we support Duke Energy's Earliest Practicable Retirement Scenario in its 2020 Integrated Resource Plans. Under this scenario, Duke would retire all of its coal plants in North Carolina by 2030.

Coal-burning power plants are costing us money and lives. Retiring Duke's aging, expensive coal fleet would save customers billions of dollars over the next decade. It would also improve the health and lives of all North Carolinians, especially Black and low-income communities disproportionately impacted by air and water pollution.

In North Carolina, Duke operates six coal plants across North Carolina that emit over 27 million tons of carbon dioxide pollution annually, making it the largest climate polluter in the state. Coal-burning plants in North Carolina also release dangerous levels of soot, sulfur dioxide, nitrous oxides, and heavy metals, and they discharge wastewater laced with mercury and arsenic into rivers and lakes across the state. In addition, Duke's toxic coal ash has poisoned drinking water sources at all of its coal plants.

Pollution from coal causes serious health effects and contributes to four of the five leading causes of death in North Carolina: cancer, stroke, heart disease, and upper

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respiratory disease. Black and low-income communities near coal plants have been hit hardest. North Carolina ranks fourth in the country in hospital admissions, heart attacks, and mortality from coal pollution.

Coal plants are the dirtiest and most expensive way to produce energy in North Carolina. Solar is already cheaper than coal in North Carolina, and all of Duke's coal plants can be replaced with more affordable clean energy. Yet Duke Energy continues to operate all six of its old, polluting coal plants—wasting billions of dollars and making customers foot the bill. Duke's coal fleet operates at a net loss, and as a result, customers pay billions extra on their bills.

The billions that Duke squanders on its coal fleet are hindering investments in solar, wind, energy efficiency, battery storage, and other cleaner, cheaper energy sources. Duke must close its coal plants and replace them with clean energy.

Cities and counties across North Carolina—including Wake County, Buncombe County, Orange County, Durham, Raleigh, Carrboro, Chapel Hill, Asheville, Elon, and Charlotte—have clean energy goals that depend on retiring fossil generation and accelerating clean energy investments.

The Integrated Resource Plans (IRPs) Duke filed last year will guide Duke's energy generation for the next 15 years. [One option in Duke's IRPs is to close all of its coal plants by 2030. Duke can reduce bills and pollution by retiring its coal fleet by 2030 and investing in clean energy.]

We support an order from the North Carolina Utilities Commission that requires Duke to retire all of its coal plants by 2030. **A coal-free North Carolina will save customers billions while providing cleaner air and water for everyone.**

Cc: Chris Ayers, Executive Director, N.C. Utilities Commission Public Staff

Supporters/signatories:

Representative John Autry
Representative Pricey Harrison
Representative Verla Insko
Representative Zack Hawkins
Representative Cynthia Ball
Representative Marcia Morey
Representative Graig Meyer

Representative John Ager
Representative Brian Turner
Representative Terence Everitt
Representative Amber Baker
Representative Julie Von Haefen
Representative Vernetta Alson

Senator Natasha Marcus
Senator Wiley Nickel
Senator Natalie Murdock
Senator Sarah Crawford
Senator Julie Mayfield
Senator DeAndrea Salvador
Senator Jay Chaudhuri
Senator Valerie Foushee
Senator Joyce Waddell

Cheryl Stallings, Apex Town Council

Dimple Ajmera, Charlotte City Councilmember, At-Large
Matthew Newton, Charlotte City Councilmember, District 5

Mayor Esther E. Manheimer, City of Asheville
Gwen Wisler, Asheville City Council
Kim Toney, Asheville City council

Amanda Edwards, Buncombe County Commissioner
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Buncombe County Commissioner
Parker Sloan, Buncombe County Commissioner
Terri Wells, Buncombe County Commissioner

Matthew Fort, Town of Davidson Commissioner

Mayor TJ Cawley, Town of Morrisville