



**BUNCOMBE  
COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT**  
—NORTH CAROLINA—

## Office of Sustainability

*Jeremiah LeRoy*  
Sustainability Officer

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MAY 12 2023

May 12, 2023

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

**Docket Number E-2 sub 1311**

Dear Ms. Dunston,

On behalf of Buncombe County Government, I would like to submit comments in support of the proposed 9.5 MW solar farm at the site of the retired coal plant at Lake Julian in Buncombe County. I appreciate the chance to share the County's perspective on this project and the overall 15 MW of solar planned for in Duke's WNC Modernization Project.

The WNC Modernization Project was controversial in our region as many organizations and residents were eager for more investments in clean energy infrastructure, including energy efficiency and renewable energy, rather than continued investment in fossil fuel infrastructure. One element that made this overall modernization project more acceptable in the region was the commitment to include 15 MW of new solar generation. This project would enable Duke and the NCUC to fulfill the commitments made when this plan was agreed to.

Buncombe County has made significant commitments to achieving a clean energy future, including setting a goal of reaching 100% renewable for its operations by 2030 and 100% renewable energy for the entire community by 2042. These aggressive goals require significant investment from a variety of stakeholders including the utility. As such, the County strongly supports the approval of the proposed project at Lake Julian.

This project is particularly attractive due to its location on a brownfield formerly used for coal fired generation and proximity to existing transmission infrastructure. Given the high cost of land in Buncombe County, the challenges of siting utility scale solar in the mountains, and the lack of need to clear cut any existing tree canopy, this site is a perfect fit for such a project.

We urge the Utilities Commission to approve this project in order to help Western North Carolina continue to move towards the clean energy future its residents deserve.

Sincerely,

Jeremiah P. LeRoy  
Sustainability Officer, Buncombe County Government

