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Clerk's Office
N.C. Utilities Commission

July 9, 2018

Ms. Lynn Jarvis, Chief Clerk
Attn: North Carolina Utilities Commission
430 N. Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

**Re: *Support for Optima TH, LLC's Application for Approval to Participate in Pilot Program
Docket No. G-9, Sub 726***

Dear North Carolina Utilities Commission:

Smithfield Foods respectfully submits its support for Optima TH, LLC's ("Optima TH") Application to Participate in a Pilot Program in Docket No. G-9, Sub 726 in Docket No. G-9, Sub 726 (the "Application").

Smithfield Foods is the owner of the Tarheel, N.C. facility on which the Optima TH project will be sited. The Tarheel facility has been capturing biogas from their waste treatment facility for some time now and using it in boilers as a replacement for natural gas. Historically, the timing of the biogas production and facility usage have not always matched, meaning that gas has been flared on a regular basis. The Optima TH project will allow all biogas produced from the facility to be cleaned and injected into the natural gas pipeline as renewable natural gas. We are very excited about the increase in efficiency this will provide our facility in Bladen County.


The Optima TH project will be useful in gathering information and data sought by the North Carolina Utilities Commission and should be approved for the pilot program. The Optima TH project differs from the other projects in the pilot program based on alternative feedstock used to produce biogas, the percentage of total renewable natural gas in the natural gas at the end of the pipeline segment, the use of the renewable natural gas for an existing industrial customer, and the ability of the project to produce usable information and data during the three (3) year pilot period.

Moreover, the Optima TH project will assist Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC and Duke Energy Progress, LLC in meeting and complying with North Carolina's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standards, while contributing to the economy in a rural community in a Tier 1 County in need of economic development.

Optima TH has already invested a significant amount of time, effort and resources in the project and is fairly far along in the development process; therefore -- assuming timely cooperation from the various other stakeholders and participants -- it can come on-line more quickly than other similarly sized projects and provide more data during the pilot project period. The project will be useful in gathering information sought by the North Carolina Utilities Commission and will be an asset to the State.

Thank you for your consideration of Smithfield Food's support for Optima TH's Application.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kraig Westerbeek', written over a horizontal line.

Kraig Westerbeek
Senior Director, Smithfield Renewables