

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
UTILITIES COMMISSION
RALEIGH**

DOCKET NO. E-100, SUB 179

BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of:
Duke Energy Progress, LLC, and
Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC, 2022
Biennial Integrated Resource Plans
and Carbon Plan

SEAN LEWIS'
INITIAL COMMENTS

Pursuant to the Order of the North Carolina Utilities Commission ("Commission") on November 29, 2021, Sean Lewis respectfully submits the following Comments in response to the Verified Petition for Approval of Carbon Plan ("Carbon Plan") submitted by Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC ("DEC") and Duke Energy Progress, LLC ("DEP") (collectively, "Companies"):

COMMENTS:

As a citizen of North Carolina and a rate-payer of Duke Energy, I have felt compelled to intervene on Docket Number E-100, SUB 179. I am intervening on behalf of myself, my descendants, and also for millions of other North Carolinians who simply are not aware of the decisions currently being made, nor of their ability to intervene in this docket. I am grateful for your consideration of my statement as you make decisions that will have reverberating effects around the world in the decades ahead.

I know that you are well-informed, intelligent people. I won't spend much time going into what is at stake in this docket other than a brief synopsis. You know of the climate crisis we are facing, here in NC and around the world. While this is fiercely debated on the political stage, resulting in a lack of concerted action by our state and

federal governments, in the scientific sphere there is no debate whatsoever. In fact, according to a recent study by Cornell University¹, 99.9% of scientists in the field agree that a) the Earth is warming, resulting in other related climatic shifts; and b) this is a direct result of human activity in the form of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Moreover, scientists are in consensus that the rate of these changes to our climate is accelerating, requiring immediate and substantial corrective actions in order to avoid catastrophic consequences to our civilization.

I do believe in capitalism. Capitalism has made our country a prosperous and desirable place to live. Around the world, people aspire to live in our country, primarily for the economic prospects and the freedom which are by-products of that capitalist system. I also believe that capitalism, from time to time, must be tempered, for the good of society. That is the role of our government. Especially so in this case, given that Duke Energy operates as a monopoly without competition.

Only so much prosperity can be brought about by money alone. There are elements which are not factored into corporations' budgeting (externalities, economically speaking), which ultimately are paid by society. At a certain point, the cost of these externalities may become greater than the economic benefit provided by the underlying activity. In these cases, the role of government is to recognize the externality that has not been properly accounted for, and to regulate the industry accordingly.

At the present moment, we are faced with an externality of epic proportions. Duke Energy is, depending how the figures are tallied, the number one or number two producer of GHG in the entire United States. Historically, the United States has produced more

¹ <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2021/10/more-999-studies-agree-humans-caused-climate-change>

GHG than any other nation, and is today the second largest emitter. It is hopefully clear that Duke Energy's emissions are of paramount importance in the uphill battle we face to dramatically shift towards renewable energy sources in order to avoid the worst effects of an already shifting climate.

Which puts you, commissioners, in a very unique position. You regulate the first or second largest GHG emitter in the US. Which puts you in a position immense power. This also comes with a great deal of responsibility. As stated previously, your decisions and actions will be felt around the world.

I understand you are in a challenging position. Duke Energy has interests too, and you must also consider those. My greatest wish in this situation would be to create a win-win. Right now, the incentives are skewed. I cannot fully blame Duke Energy because they are responding to the incentives set forth. Currently, their incentive is to build expensive infrastructure in order to guarantee higher returns, regardless of efficiency or any other social considerations. While I wish they would not be solely focused on the financial side of things, I understand their position and the power that money can have over people.

Longer term, I would urge you to consider re-writing the incentives. How can we ensure that Duke Energy remains profitable, while also ensuring the energy security and well-being of future generations of North Carolinians, as well as people around the world? Nothing is impossible! One thing is for sure though; at the present moment we cannot afford to let Duke dictate our future. We must insist that they step up and participate in being part of the solution, despite the fact that it might be temporarily less profitable.

Again, the government's role, your role, is to ensure that the people of this state are considered and cared for. The only thing that we cannot afford to do is allow Duke to continue generating dirty electricity. We simply cannot afford to adopt their version of a Carbon Plan. We need to have Duke invest more substantially in renewable sources. These renewable sources are cost competitive, and in fact most are already cheaper than fossil fuels, even before accounting for the aforementioned social costs. So even strictly economically speaking, it should be a no-brainer to work towards a rapid transition to the cheaper alternatives (although again, re-thinking Duke's incentives will be important, so that everyone can be happy; I'm not only concerned about our planet and civilization, I care about our energy provider, too).

I close, Commissioners, re-echoing the enormous gravity of the decisions you are making. May you keep "we the people's" interest at heart. In light of the immense power Duke Energy wields, this is ever more important. I do not envy your position, and I know these are not easy decisions to be making. I pray that you will do what is just and prudent. Assuming we make it through this climate crisis, history will look back at these critical moments and laud those who had the courage to do what was right.

Respectfully submitted this the 15th of July, 2022

/s/ Sean Lewis
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE I hereby certify that I have this day served a copy of the foregoing document upon all counsel of record by email transmission. This the 15th day of July, 2022.

By: /s/ Sean Lewis

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