

## BEFORE THE NORTH CAROLINA UTILITIES COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. E-100, SUB 161

In the Matter of	)	
Commission Rules Related to Electric	)	JOINT SUPPLEMENTAL
Customer Billing Data	)	COMMENTS OF DUKE ENERGY
	)	CAROLINAS, LLC AND DUKE
	)	ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC
	)	

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NOW COME Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (“DEC”) and Duke Energy Progress, LLC (“DEP”) (collectively, the “Companies”) pursuant to the North Carolina Utilities Commission’s (“Commission” or “NCUC”) April 22, 2022 *Order Requiring Filing of Supplemental Comments (“April 22 Order”)* in the above-captioned docket, and submit their supplemental comments on the issues addressed in that Order, including comments on the implementation of the Companies’ customer billing and data management system (“Customer Connect”), the Companies’ advance metering infrastructure and how these developments affect the parties’ previously filed comments in this docket. Additionally, the Companies’ comments address how Customer Connect and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (“AMI”) allow customers to access their own information and the extent to which third parties are permitted to access that customer information, and the manner by which the availability of that access is communicated to customers or third parties.

### Background

As summarized in the Commission’s *April 22 Order*, this docket involves proposed revisions to Commission Rule R8-7 (Information for Consumers), Commission Rule R8-8 (Meter Reading and Bill Forms), and Commission Rule R8-51 (Provision of Past Billing

History Upon Customer Request). On February 4, 2019, the Companies filed joint initial comments (“Initial Comments”) that expressed general support with the Public Staff’s revisions to all three rules with additional recommendations. With regard to certain provisions of Rule R8-7 and R8-8, the Companies stated that in order to be able to comply they needed to complete the implementation of Customer Connect. With regard to Rule R8-51, the Companies did not support the portions of the Public Staff’s revisions to Rule R8-51(d), (g) and (h) that they proposed to go into effect on January 1, 2022, because these revisions added risk to the deployment of Customer Connect, as well as ongoing security requirements and administrative costs which outweighed the benefits.

On July 17, 2020, the Companies filed joint reply comments that addressed proposed Commission Rule R8-51 (“Reply Comments”). With limited exceptions and consistent with Initial Comments, the Companies supported most of the Public Staff’s revisions to this rule, while opposing the Public Staff’s revisions to R8-51(d), (g) and (h).

More recently, on April 25, 2022, the Companies filed an informational letter regarding implementation of the standardized AMI meter programming and Customer Connect. Customer Connect enables the completion of customer rate changes without requiring a physical meter charge at a customer premise. To take advantage of this new capability, however, the Companies are deploying a single standard meter program to all AMI meters in the service territory, which may implicate revisions to Rule R8-8.

### **Implementation of Customer Connect**

As noted in the *April 22 Order*, the Companies implemented Customer Connect in 2021. On April 5, 2021, DEC successfully transitioned its legacy customer account data

to the new billing system. On November 5, 2021, DEP successfully transitioned its legacy customer account data to the new billing system.

With Customer Connect, the Companies' customers have increased access to their electric usage data. For example, customers now have access to up to 13 months of usage information in graph form as well as the average monthly temperature for each month on their monthly invoice<sup>1</sup>, and residential net metering customers now have access to both delivered and received information on both the monthly invoice and via My Account.

Additionally, customers with a My Account profile on the Company's website are presented with a usage graph immediately upon login, on their account dashboard, where they can access usage details quickly. Customers with more than one meter can easily toggle between meters to view the energy usage for each one. Customers continue to have the ability to access more granular data based on their meter type, including exporting their energy usage by day, week, billing cycle or year. Furthermore, and as described in the Companies' previous Initial Comments and Reply Comments, customers may also compare their usage to the same month the previous year, if applicable, and export the data in a customer-friendly format. On this same page, customers are presented with the "Download my Data" option to allow them to download their energy usage details in a machine readable format (eXtensible Markup Language, or "XML") that enables the details to be utilized with other applications, and customers may provide their data to third-parties after downloading it. The Download my Data feature, implemented in February

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<sup>1</sup> Usage graph information is provided for usage at the same location for the same customer.

2020, allows customers to download up to 24 months of usage in 15, 30 or 60-minute intervals, based on the meter configuration.

The Companies are in the final stages of accumulating interval data per customer/per account in the new system and expect to make the rate comparison option available to DEC customers in third quarter 2022, and DEP customers in late fourth quarter, or early first quarter 2023. The Annual Rate Review program is anticipated to begin later this year.

### **Development of Advanced Metering Infrastructure**

The Companies have generally completed their AMI deployment with now more than 99% of the Companies' meters being AMI. The AMI deployment combined with the Customer Connect platform have enabled the Companies to establish Standardized AMI Meter Programming, as detailed in the Companies' April 25, 2022 filing in this docket. This standardized meter programming allows for customer rate changes without requiring a physical meter change at a customer premise. Standardized AMI Meter Programming provides the following benefits and does not impede a customer's ability to access their bill and energy usage information.

- Rate Flexibility
- Customer Satisfaction and Convenience
- Reduced Customer Liability
- Employee Safety
- Cost Savings
- Reduced Human Performance Risk



With this new meter programming, totalized energy usage and generation<sup>2</sup> will continue to be displayed on the face of the meter for all customers.

### **Companies' Position on Proposed Rule R8-7**

As noted in the Companies' Initial Comments, they generally agree with the Public Staff's proposed revisions to Commission Rule R8-7.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, with regard to proposed Rule R8-7(c), and as noted above, the Companies expect to make the Rate Comparison option available on its authenticated website in the third quarter of this year. With this feature, customers will have the ability to compare eligible rates for their account. Additionally, the Annual Rate Review program is expected to be available later this year. As such, if the proposed rules are effective prior to these features being available, the Companies may seek a waiver of their application in the interim.

### **Companies' Position on Proposed Rule R8-8**

The Companies' are generally supportive of the Public Staff's proposed revisions to Commission Rule R8-8 with limited exception. As discussed in the previously filed Initial Joint Comments<sup>4</sup> they expressed concern with proposed Commission Rule R8-8(d), which states that:

The utility shall strive to maintain consistency between the data observed at the meter face and that maintained in the billing and customer data systems, such that the customer can reasonably understand any discrepancy between the data that is observable at the meter face and the data that is available through an electronic platform provided by the utility to communicate said data with the customer.

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<sup>2</sup> The display for total generation will remain at zero unless a net metering rider is in place.

<sup>3</sup> See Initial Comments, p. 1-2. (February 10, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> See Initial Comments, p. 3 (February 10, 2020).

As previously discussed, this provision is inconsistent with Section VIII of DEC's service regulations that are currently approved and on file at the NCUC. These regulations provide that:

Meters will be read and bills rendered monthly. Meter readings may be obtained manually on the customer's premises, or remotely using radio frequency or other automated meter reading technology. Billing statements will show the readings of the meter at the beginning and end of the billing period, except; however, when interval load data is used to determine the bill under certain rate schedules or riders, only the billing units may be shown.

This service regulation reflects that, for accounts billed with the detailed information by rating period, such as Time of Use rates, the Companies do not have the ability to show all components on the face of the meter. Additionally, Section 9(a) of DEP's service regulations have been updated and approved by the NCUC, and now reflect the same language.

Both the Companies' service regulations and the Standardized AMI Meter Programming reflect that the Companies will not have the ability to show all components on the face of the meter and recommend that this provision be clarified to ensure the Companies remain compliant with the NCUC's rules.

#### **Companies' Position on Proposed Rule R8-51**

As previously discussed in the Companies' Reply Comments, the Companies support a Commission Rule that governs access to their customers' nonpublic data that:

- Provides customers with control of their data;
- Provides the utilities subject to the Rule with clear, unambiguous terms to foster and promote ready compliance; and

- Does not impose additional costs and burdens on customers that outweigh any benefits to customers.<sup>5</sup>

The Companies believe that the Public Staff's proposed Rule R8-51 best meets those goals, with limited exceptions.

The Companies oppose the Public Staff's proposed revisions to Commission Rule R8-51(d), (g) and (h) that mandate a "Green Button Connect" functionality where third parties, other than the customer, may access customer energy usage data electronically. Although the Companies support allowing customers access to their energy usage data to better inform their energy usage in the future, and already have methods in place to do so, they oppose the proposed mandates. By authorizing third parties to have ready access to customers' energy usage data, the mandates impose costs on customers where there has been little-to-no demand for the functionality.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the Companies have processes in place to provide access to customer usage data to third-parties with customer consent.

Moreover, the Companies implemented functionality similar to "Green Button" Download my Data in February 2020. In the Companies' Reply Comments, they noted far less than one percent of customers accessing their online account selected this feature.

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<sup>5</sup> See Reply Comments, p. 1 (July 17, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> The Commission itself recently reviewed a request by the Companies to share aggregated, non-public customer data with third parties, absent customer authorization to do so. Citing its reluctance to allow the Companies to disclose the non-public aggregated data to a pool of third parties participating in the Low Income Affordability Collaborative, the Commission allowed for a waiver, but limited the number of third-party Collaborative members that would have access to it. *Order Granting Limited Waiver of Code of Conduct Provisions With Conditions*, Docket Nos. E-7, Sub 1214, Sub 1213, and Sub 1187, and Docket Nos. E-2, Sub 1219, 1193, issued March 10, 2022.

Now, more than two years later, the percentage of customers choosing this feature remains minimal.

Jurisdiction	Online Sessions January 1, 2022 – June 12, 2022	“Download my Data” Sessions	% of Sessions using Feature
DEC NC	1,193,800	3,413	0.29%
DEP NC	920,400	3,725	0.40%

Since the Companies’ customers have shown minimal demand for this information themselves, the Companies are reluctant to invest the required time and resources adding functionalities to provide an option to allow third-parties ready and on-going access to customer usage data. The Companies do not believe the Commission should mandate delivery of this product when there has been no material demand from customers.

Respectfully submitted this 22nd day of July 2022.

By: 

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ATTORNEYS FOR DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC  
AND DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of JOINT SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS OF DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC AND DUKE ENERGY PROGRESS, LLC has been served by electronic mail (e-mail), hand delivery, or by depositing a copy in the United States Mail, first class postage prepaid, properly addressed to parties of record.

This, the 22nd day of July, 2022.



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