

NC WARN 

# STOP <sup>The</sup> ANNUAL RATE HIKE BILL

Don't let the utilities double our power bills and ruin our unique chance to help slow climate change

*Duke Energy and Progress Energy are pushing state politicians to make customers pay years in advance for nuclear power plants that aren't needed and are crowding out clean energy*

## It's About Economic Justice

Annual increases in electricity rates are harming seniors, families and businesses, and causing the price of other needs to rise – especially affecting those on low and fixed incomes.

Duke Energy and Progress Energy want the **Annual Rate Hikes** bill because the free market refuses to gamble on construction of financially risky nuclear power plants.

The Duke-Progress business plan is to raise rates every year to pay for nuclear plants that won't operate until at least 2023, if ever.

*“In this difficult economy, this is not the time to increase utility rates on seniors.”*

- AARP of North Carolina

The **Annual Rate Hikes** bill would force customers to cover cost overruns. Similar projects in Georgia and South Carolina have suffered \$100s of millions in cost increases – before construction was even licensed.

Duke Energy has already raised rates every year since 2009, and says it will seek another rate hike this year – before it even begins building nuclear plants.

Duke and Progress lobbyists claim the **Annual Rate Hikes** bill will save customers money. But pro-nuclear Florida senator Mike Fasano warned NC legislators against passing this bill:

*“Every dollar a citizen or business keeps in their pockets instead of sending to the power companies is a dollar that can help strengthen the Florida economy.”*

## It's About Our Environment & Health

North Carolina is uniquely positioned to create a *positive* climate tipping point, which is urgently needed.

Two of the world's largest coal polluters are based here. Duke and Progress plan to keep burning huge amounts of coal for decades.

Experts insist we can replace coal by 2025 with modest increases in solar, coastal wind, cogeneration and energy-saving programs.



North Carolina has the potential equivalent of several nuclear power plants worth of capacity for EACH of those resources – all cheaper than or competitive with electricity from new nuclear.

While they keep hoping to build nuclear plants, Duke and Progress are making climate change worse – by holding back advances in those clean, economically superior technologies.

Duke and Progress insist they cannot attempt new nuclear plants without this legislation. So blocking the **Annual Rate Hikes** bill will push them toward energy efficiency and renewable power.

## It's About Our Water and Security

The nukes and fossil fuel path uses massive water resources, leaving communities vulnerable as droughts and heat waves increase.

Nuclear plants are inherently dangerous – and the new designs are experimental. Highly radioactive “spent” fuel will remain a threat at each plant indefinitely.

Other states are avoiding new power plants and protecting health and water by developing clean energy and the thousands of jobs it brings.

Why should North Carolina be stuck with a destructive, 20<sup>th</sup> Century energy plan?

## It's About Democratic Decision-Making

We all know that our democracy has been captured by corporate money and influence.

Duke and Progress want the NC legislature to let them automatically raise rates every year – with little review by the Utilities Commission.

We North Carolinians will not remain silent while power companies decide our future.

Tell your lawmakers to stand firm against the utilities' lobbyists and campaign money – and to protect the public from what should be private risks.

## How you can help:

### 1) Tell your legislators to prevent annual increases in our power bills that pay for high-risk nuclear plants.

*Short calls are best, but email works. Call the legislature at 919-733-4111 and ask them to put you through to your state representative.*

### 2) Reach out to North Carolinians across the political spectrum to help defeat this corporate welfare. This is an issue we can all agree on.

#### CONSUMERS ☆AGAINST☆ RATE HIKES

A diverse coalition of nonprofits blocked the **Annual Rate Hikes** bill last year ... and is working hard to stop it again in the May-June legislative session.

AARP North Carolina - Action NC - Alliance for NC SAVE\$ ENERGY - Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League - Clean Water for NC - NC Fair Share - NC Housing Coalition - NC Interfaith Power & Light (a program of the NC Council of Churches) - NC Justice Center - NC League of Conservation Voters - NC WARN - Western NC Physicians for Social Responsibility

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NC WARN is a member-based nonprofit tackling the accelerating crisis posed by climate change – along with the various risks of nuclear power – by watch-dogging utility practices and working for a swift North Carolina transition to energy efficiency and clean power generation. See our web site for membership information.