

ISSUE BRIEF

Duke Energy Plans 20 Years of Rate Hikes, Climate Destruction, Risky Nukes – and Almost No Solar, Wind and Energy Savings

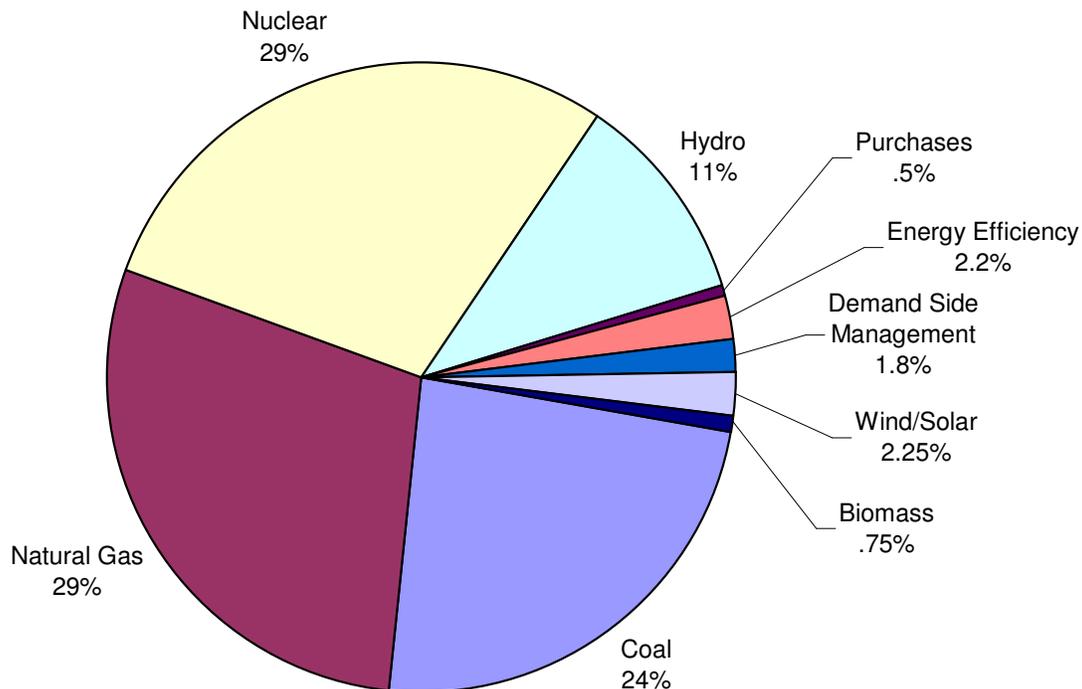
Despite CEO Jim Rogers' PR, Duke's formal plans for the Carolinas hold firmly to state-of-the-art technologies – of the 1960s

As Duke Energy continues its six-year PR campaign touting CEO Jim Rogers' concerns about climate change and North Carolina's economic health, long-range plans filed this month with state regulators contradict his professions. The plans reflect serial rate hikes to pay for an aggressive expansion of generating plants, and high carbon emissions for the next two decades.

In an age of enormous, long-term economic challenges and a climate crisis roaring toward a runaway condition, Duke's plans are akin to Ford Motors reintroducing production of its exploding Pinto.

Both of Duke's service companies in the Carolinas – one operated by Progress Energy – plan to develop minuscule levels of solar and wind power and energy-saving programs despite an expensive, years-long ad campaign touting the utilities' green corporate credentials. In fact, Duke very likely spends more money each year trying to manipulate public and political debate than it does on renewables or energy efficiency programs.

NC WARN's initial analysis of both service companies' long-range planning documents, called Integrated Resource Plans, shows Duke Energy boldly hanging on to the technological advances of the 1960s. Among the highlights:



Duke Energy Carolinas 2032 Resources (MW Capacity)

Serial Rate Increases: By 2032 Duke Carolinas plans to build 7,999 megawatts (MW) of capacity – equal to about seven large nuclear plants, which would cost tens of billions of dollars and require frequent rate increases. It appears that Duke is on track to double electricity rates this decade, compared to 2009 levels when Duke began aggressively building power plants. Duke justifies this massive expansion – 38% between 2010 and 2032 – by projecting an annual average of 1.7% growth in demand despite flat or falling demand over the past decade. We still think Duke plans to sell excess juice to other regions.

Carbon Emissions Could Rise: Duke plans to burn 75% as much coal in 2032 as it will next year, and to greatly increase its use of natural gas. Despite Duke’s successful and deceptive PR campaign about “retiring coal plants,” it will keep almost all of its large coal plants in service in case gas prices rise.* If Duke indeed burns 25% less coal, emission reductions will be nearly offset by the massive increase in use of natural gas, assuming gas is 50% “cleaner” than coal when burned. When life-cycle methane leakage from fracking is considered, however, Duke’s overall carbon emissions could be far higher in 2032 than they are today

Renewables: In 2032 Duke Carolinas plans to deploy solar and wind power equivalent to 2.2% of its generating capacity.

Energy Efficiency: Energy-saving programs will represent a whopping 2.2% of Duke’s generating capacity in 2032.

** NOTE: For four years Duke has repeatedly gained green PR and news stories by touting plans to close the same coal units. Recent filings show that eight of those units didn’t operate at all in the last year, and when combined, all the retirees operated under 10% of the time. Progress has gained a similar green salute by retiring small, old coal units.*

Attend the Utilities Commission’s public IRP hearing:

February 11, 2013, 7:00 PM
The Dobbs Building, Room 2115
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, NC