

# Duke Rate Hike Hearing Toolkit

## Checklist for NCACDC Members

The checklist below outlines the steps you can take to help demonstrate public support:

- **CONTACT constituents**, churches and crisis ministries, local NAACP branches, senior centers, sororities and fraternities, neighborhood associations, and other community organizations to recruit as many people as possible to attend the hearing in your area.
- **IDENTIFY speakers** for the hearing and schedule a workshop a few days before the hearing to review the attached toolkit and help speakers prepare their testimony. (Order a couple of pizzas if you can!)
- **NOTIFY** Erin Brown at NCACDC 919.831.9710 x108 or [erin.ncacdc@gmail.com](mailto:erin.ncacdc@gmail.com) if it would be helpful to have a webinar with the speakers to prepare for the hearing.
- **UTILIZE volunteers** to make reminder calls the day before the hearing and to coordinate last minute transportation needs.
- **COORDINATE transportation** to the hearings utilizing carpools, vans and buses provided by local churches or senior centers.
- **ATTEND the hearing!!!** NCACDC members should encourage staff presence at the NC Utility Commission hearings and identify a staff member or board member to testify.



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## Fact Sheet

### Duke Energy Rate Hikes:

Proposing 14% increase for residential consumers

If approved, residential rates will be 30% higher than in 2009.

Duke's proposal guarantees them a profit of 11.25% but we foot the bill

### Duke/Progress Long Term Energy Plan:

**Duke/Progress plans to raise consumers' rates to pay for unnecessary power plants.**

- The business plan will raise rates annually to pay for new power plants even though long-term electricity demand is decreasing.
- Other states are developing energy-saving programs that reduce costs and generate thousands of jobs.
- Duke Energy does provide clean energy – in areas of the country where they don't have a monopoly and there is competition among other energy providers
- In NC, Duke Energy exercises its monopoly power through unnecessary rate hikes, increased nuclear power plant investment and a refusal to invest in clean energy.

**The plan relies on expensive, dirty energy instead of cheaper, cleaner methods.**

- The plan includes doubling capacity from natural gas (fracking) with no reduction in capacity from coal.
- The proposed plan includes only a fractional increase in clean energy capacity (solar and wind) in the next 20 years. (NC WARN)

### North Carolina's Economic Reality:

**Duke is out of touch with the economic reality of its residential consumers.**

- NC has the **5<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment in the U.S.** (9.2% vs. 7.5% nat'l avg.)
- Over 50% of NC's counties have double-digit unemployment rates



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## Tips for speaking at a public hearing

### Preparation:

- Limit your testimony to 3 minutes (500-700 words).
- Think about why this issue is important to you and how it personally affects you or your loved ones.
- Avoid quoting statistics unless you know the facts and can reference sources.
- Examples of types of testimony:
  - Senior citizen on fixed income who can't afford a higher monthly bill
  - Trying to save money by keeping the thermostat low but your bill keeps going up
  - Personal experience of saving money through energy efficiency retrofit
- Practice your statement to get comfortable before the hearing.
- Bring your friends and neighbors!

**Strong public support can stop these proposed rate hikes.**  
Public outcry has already resulted in the NC Supreme Court reversing the approval of the 7.2% Progress rate hike – now let's do the same for the proposed Duke rate hike!

### At the hearing:

- Arrive at least 30 minutes early to sign up to testify and wait patiently. It's first come, first serve.
- When your name is called, you'll need to walk forward, state your name and address and be sworn in before you testify.
- Speak from your heart or read your statement if that makes you more comfortable. Just remember to make eye contact with the Commissioners.
- Bring 10 copies of your written testimony for the Commissioners and staff.
- If the opposition makes negative remarks, don't respond or become argumentative. Stay focused on your testimony.
- You may be interrupted with questions from the Commissioners. Simply answer to the best of your ability and get back to your point. Don't let interruptions throw you off.
- Remember to thank the Commissioners for listening.

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## Sample Testimony

### #1 - Single mother with small children

I'm here today because I can't afford a more expensive light bill. I can't afford a more expensive anything. I'm the provider of my family. It's just me and my two kids and I'm struggling to make ends meet. Every day I worry about how I can afford the rent, the electricity, the water, the groceries, the doctor bills. My little girl has asthma and is in and out of the hospital so much that her co-pays are like another bill. I work a full-time job making minimum wage and I know I'm never going to feel security and sleep through the nights if I don't go back to school. And I want to go back to school. I want to get my CNA license and be a home healthcare provider but it seems every time I feel like I'm about to catch my breath, I'm pushed back underwater. People out here are struggling. North Carolina has the fifth highest unemployment rate in the nation so I know I'm not the only one who thinks this rate hike is going to break them. It's people out there in a much worse situation than I am, people without jobs, who can't afford to pay their light bill now and who definitely won't be able to pay it once the bill goes up. I don't understand why I'm playing by the rules, doing everything I can to save a dime here and there and Duke Energy can decide it wants more money, more profits. I'm asking you as a mother, the sole provider of a family of three, a resident of a state still in economic distress to stop the rate hike. I make \$7.25 an hour. If my daughter's not in the hospital or neither one of my kids is sick and I'm able to work each and every shift, I bring home \$950 after taxes for the month. Right now, I'm paying \$160 per month to Duke Energy and that rate hike could make my bill increase easily to over \$200. I don't have that kind of money. My mother doesn't have it. My friends don't have it. My neighbors don't have it. Nobody I've talked to can afford that kind of an increase when we're still struggling from the recession. Help us. Thank you.

### # 2 - Senior on fixed income

I'm 67 years old and I've lived in this area my whole life. It's home. My husband came back from fighting over in Vietnam and we bought this house and raised our children and now we're helping to raise our grandchildren. We're retired now though so our money is tighter than tight. We can't get a part time job to help with higher energy costs. No one wants to hire an old lady like me. So when Duke Energy decides it wants a rate increase, it makes my blood boil. They're not asking their industrial clients to pay more, they're asking residential ratepayers who live on fixed incomes to give them a greater share of profits and it's just not fair. I think their profits are just fine where they are now. Everything is more expensive these days. Groceries, doctors' visits, medicines, light bills, taxes. You know how poor people keep their grocery bill down? By buying junk. You know how poor people keep their doctors' visits down? By not going to the doctor. You know how poor people keep their medication bill down? By cutting their pills in half. You know how poor people keep their light bill down? By turning the heat down to 59 in winter and freezing during the night. By staying out of the house as much as possible during the day because it never seems to get warm enough. You know what I could really use? What my neighbors across the state could use? We could use that big old energy company that has billions in profits to set up a fund for energy efficiency retrofits so seniors and poor people can keep warm in winter and cool in the summer. You know what I'd do with the energy savings from an energy efficient house? I'd stop splitting my medication. I'd buy some fresh fruits and vegetables and meat that's not on special. I'd have the extra money to put aside for a rainy day, for the next time Duke Energy decides it wants more, more, more of my money. Maybe if we had a statewide energy efficiency retrofit program, more of us would have it to spare.



Strengthening Communities,  
Increasing Opportunities