

NC WARN

NEWS RELEASE
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“Does Duke Energy Think You’re Stupid?” **Campaign Launched by NC WARN**

As regulators near a key decision, statewide TV, newspaper, on-line ads expose green-washing and Duke – Koch Brothers efforts to kill solar power

Statement by executive director Jim Warren:

DURHAM, NC – Today NC WARN launched another round of statewide media ads in its campaign to expose Duke Energy’s efforts to kill North Carolina’s growing solar power industry at both the rooftop and large-scale levels. By recently trumpeting short-term projects for a few NC companies, Duke has misled observers into believing it supports solar, while its 15-year plans filed with the NC Utilities Commission shows those projects are the end of the line for Duke’s solar commitment in the Carolinas.

The Commission will soon issue a ruling – in a case originating last winter – that could allow Duke to continue choking hundreds of large, independent solar projects proposed across North Carolina.

NC WARN’s, [satirical TV ad](#) running on six network affiliates in the Charlotte, Triad and Triangle markets, along with [newspaper](#) and on-line ads and grassroots action, continues a months-long campaign to expose the disconnect between corporate propaganda versus official intentions.

The TV ad shows the same star of July’s satirical ad, again acting as a Duke PR official, offending Duke honchos and staffers with grossly exaggerated “fish stories” that echo the corporation’s claims about its solar prowess. The video concludes with a giant tidal wave of coal over-washing a solar farm. Print and on-line ads are entitled “Does Duke Energy Think You’re Stupid?” and similarly describe the Charlotte-based giant spending millions to “green-wash”, or mislead the public about its commitment to clean energy.

At a four-day hearing in July, solar companies made clear that Duke Energy is already harming them, and that its new proposals could destroy solar in this state. Not only is Duke seeking to lower the price paid for power from large, wholesale projects, it has also been stalling negotiations with project developers, who say it now takes months or years to finalize deals with Duke.

That hearing amplified the concerns NC WARN first outlined in July’s “Duke Hates Solar” [TV and print ads](#) and in our legal case. The national effort to kill solar is here, as rapid solar growth has cut into corporate profits and threatens the business model of old-school, monopoly utilities.

For years, Duke has gotten away with claiming to support solar power while its official, long-term planning documents prove that all renewables would make up only 4% of its total generation in the Carolinas in 2029. Duke has spent millions to paint its corporate image with a green façade that obscures its efforts to continue burning huge amounts of coal and build fracking-gas and nuclear plants.

Duke has invested billions in solar and wind in the western US. In the Southeast, however, Duke has used its monopoly control to do the bare minimum with renewables.

Solar photovoltaic power is now cheaper than kilowatt-hours from newly-constructed dirty power

plants when all costs are considered. At the July hearings, Duke argued that regulators should continue to disregard coal ash clean-ups, climate destruction and other externalized costs when comparing dirty power to solar and wind.

Rooftop and large-scale solar companies have grown in North Carolina – adding thousands of jobs and other economic benefits – in spite of Duke Energy’s efforts. Every new solar panel helps all customers by reducing Duke’s case to keep raising rates to build power plants we don’t need.

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Now in its 27th year, NC WARN’s mission urgency is to induce Charlotte-based Duke Energy – now the world’s largest corporate utility – to make a strong shift to clean, affordable energy in order to stem pollution’s damage to communities, and to help avert climate tipping points and ongoing rate hikes.