

Testimony of Dale Evarts to the North Carolina Utilities Commission

Duke Energy Integrated Resource Plan

February 4th, 2019

Good evening. My name is Dale Evarts. I'm here to speak in support of rejecting Duke Energy's Integrated Resource Plan and reducing North Carolina's costly reliance on fossil fuels that is unhealthy and damaging to rate payers and the planet.

I was born and raised in North Carolina, and have spent most of my adult life here. Until recently, I led the Climate and International Group at the Environmental Protection Agency's Air Quality Office in the Research Triangle Park. We dealt with the impacts of climate change on air quality, and worked to reduce air pollution and climate change in the U.S. and globally. In my role at EPA, I served with other scientists and policy makers on a High-Level Advisory Group that in 2011 issued a United Nation's report on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants.

The report dealt in part with methane – natural gas – that Duke Energy is proposing to greatly increase its use of in coming years.

- Methane is 100 times more effective than carbon dioxide in trapping heat.
- It also contributes to ozone smog, a pollutant that affects lung development in children as well as people with asthma, lung and heart disease. Ozone also damages food crops such as corn, wheat and soybeans.
- Methane lasts only about a decade or so in the atmosphere (compared to a century or more for carbon dioxide). So reducing methane emissions now means less heat trapped now, not decades from now, and less ozone smog to affect our health and agriculture.
- This is important: Reducing methane means healthier air for us and our children, and less of this very potent heat-trapping gas in the air, where it fuels the more intense and wetter hurricanes, severe weather, and coastal flooding that is costing our state billions of dollars.
- Our report showed that full implementation of the technologies to reduce methane and other short-lived climate pollutants would reduce future global warming by 0.5°C while avoiding 2.4 million premature deaths and the loss of 1–4 per cent of the global production of major food crops each year.

Methane is released from oil and gas operations, including hydraulic fracking, and from the transport of natural gas via pipelines. The best way to control methane from these sources is to reduce the demand for natural gas. This is the opposite of what Duke Energy is proposing.

You are hearing from other speakers tonight say that North Carolina can do this. Renewable energy technologies are affordable. Make North Carolina a leader – not a laggard – in this transition to the cleanest, cheapest, most stable and reliable sources of energy modern society has ever known – sun, wind, water, and energy storage – and away from increasingly expensive and dirty fossil fuels.

Insist that Duke Energy take seriously their fiscal (and moral) obligation to the people of North Carolina. Help them join with other leading utilities and states around the U.S. who are taking bold steps to expand renewable energy. Create jobs for North Carolinians. Help save the rate-payers you are here to represent billions of dollars in the coming decades, both in terms of the cost of electricity and the avoided costs of damaging climate change and air pollution. Please send Duke Energy's IRP back to the drawing board.