



October 1, 2018

Lynn J. Good
President and CEO
Duke Energy Corporation

Subject: Actual corporate practices vs magical propaganda – your letter in response to my op-ed blaming Duke execs for making Hurricane Florence worse

Dear Ms. Good,

Duke Energy executives have spent three years suppressing attention to your massive fracked “natural” gas expansion, ignoring public calls by NC WARN and allies to curb your climate-wrecking methane emissions, and opposing federal requirements to do so. Now, ironically, it’s somewhat refreshing that Duke’s executive team has responded publicly to my [recent opinion piece](#) that was published in several media outlets. However, your [published rebuttal](#) is filled with deceptive corporate PR claims about methane and renewables that are easily disproven. I’ll respond to just three key deceptions:

First, in his letter, Senior VP Selim Bingol claims that “Duke Energy has invested more than \$6 billion in solar energy.” As you know, that \$6 billion was mostly spent outside your monopoly-captive Carolinas. Yet the claim is sandwiched between two other statements referring to North Carolina, creating the illusion that Duke is fostering rather than impeding solar in this state. In reality, your newly-filed 15-year plan projects Duke to be only 7% renewable in the Carolinas in 2033 (8% if you consider burning forests for biomass “renewable”). That leaves Duke as a laggard while many other utilities truly go green.

Next, regarding climate pollution, you and other top Duke executives keep saying that your “emissions” are way down. Every time you say that, it’s a deception. And every one of you knows it. Venting of unburned “natural” gas – which is mostly methane, a super-potent heat trapper – more than offsets any reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. Since your huge gas expansion began in 2015, you have refused our multiple public requests to justify increasing the use of methane although, by consensus view of relevant scientists, it is a key driver of the climate crisis. Your silence up until now, and your admission to WUNC radio in 2017 that you, in fact, oppose requirements to curb methane emissions, has suddenly morphed into a magical PR claim that Duke has (apparently in secret) *reduced* methane emissions. That claim is not supported by any official documentation, and

if it were true, surely it would have been part of your PR message long before now. And, assuming you care that humanity is quickly approaching a disastrous climate tipping point, surely you would openly exhort other power suppliers to deploy cost-effective methane-capturing measures, as NC WARN and allies have repeatedly urged.

Finally, regarding the worn-out corporate claim – which we were surprised to see in your new 15-year plan – that new gas plants are needed to back up all new renewables, I noted in an August op-ed that renewables combined with storage are increasingly beating new “natural” gas power plants on economics and reliability in other states. Construction divisions of General Electric and Siemens that focused on peaking gas units have recently collapsed, and *Barron’s* ran a July cover story whose title says it all: “*Dramatic advances in storage technology and declining costs of wind and solar energy are upending the electricity business.*” Examples since my op-ed include: Arizona Public Service signed a 15-year deal for peaking power from a 50 MW solar-powered battery, which beat natural gas on cost, and, in California, three gas-fired power plants were cancelled in favor of battery storage. Critically for a clean energy future, batteries can do what gas turbines can’t – store and discharge renewable energy.

How is it that Duke Energy investors don’t demand that you join the 21st Century? Market forces are pushing your industry toward distributed renewables paired with storage. I still hope that you will rise to the challenge and shift direction while there remains a little time to avert runaway climate chaos.

Obviously, Duke Energy and its prominent critics are in abject dispute over key facts regarding your operations. This amplifies the need for the news media to evaluate these straightforward facts. I’m eager to back my “wild insinuations,” and again call on you – if you are proud and confident of your actual practices – to promote them honestly instead of continuing to pretend that gas is clean and that North Carolina is decades away from being able to replace fossil fuels with renewables plus storage.

Finally, as noted in my op-ed, we admire Duke Energy workers who restore power during storms. But they are poorly served by executives who make those storms worse by fueling the fracking boom instead of joining the clean energy revolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Warren". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Warren
Executive Director