

SAVE ROOFTOP SOLAR IN NC!

DUKE ENERGY'S SOLAR SCHEME UNDERMINES CAROLINAS ELECTRICITY CUSTOMERS & SOLAR ROOFTOP INDUSTRY

A Duke Energy scheme to stifle the growth of rooftop solar power was approved last year in South Carolina and is now being considered by the NC Utilities Commission (NCUC). If successful, it would undermine “net metering,” the requirement that rooftop solar customers be credited for excess power they share with neighbors. Despite Duke’s long-running efforts, net metering has survived and gradually allowed customer-owned solar to grow.

Duke Energy’s scheme would greatly limit rooftop solar installations. It is consistent with the monopoly’s puny commitment to renewables in the Carolinas. Duke’s latest long-term plan projects a massive buildout of new gas-fired power plants (over 50 units) and an increase from 5% renewables now to only 14% by 2035, compared to a national average of 19.8%.

Here are key points of Duke’s proposal:

1. Would make the payback worse for every solar household – especially low- and moderate-income ones.

An already bloated fixed charge would jump to as much as \$28/month for solar households. Duke says it will consider a plan for low-income customers at a later date. California has 150,000 low-income solar homes, compared to 20,000 *total* solar rooftops in NC.

2. The only good part of the deal may not survive.

A rebate for solar customers who also install a smart thermostat is being considered separately by the NCUC and may not be approved. If approved, the incentive is only for homes heated with electricity and is not available to current solar owners.

3. Confusion for current solar owners.

Duke offers confusing options for existing solar customers and eventually forces them onto the new scheme.



4. Repeats the decade-long bogus claim by Duke and the Koch brothers that net metering forces the poor to subsidize affluent solar customers. Duke claims this scheme *solves* that fabricated “problem,” while it would actually *reduce* access to solar for low- and fixed-income Carolinians. Duke refuses to share its “cost shift” math or to support an independent value-of-solar study. In a separate SC

case involving Dominion Energy, a technical consultant stated: “there is not presently a cost shift from solar customers to non-participating ratepayers, and distributed solar is a cost-effective resource for ratepayers.”

5. Hurts all Carolinians by boosting Duke Energy’s plan to burn more fossil fuels. The growth of rooftop solar reduces grid power demand, which cuts into Duke’s revenues and removes its supposed justification to build over 50 climate-wrecking, fracked gas-fired power units while constantly raising rates. That’s why Duke keeps backing schemes to limit solar, all while assuring people it’s a “green” corporation.

6. Ignores market trends showing solar installations are now commonly coupled with on-site battery storage. Duke says it will consider adding an incentive for customers to

Evidence continues to support NC WARN’s [NC Clean Path 2025](#) report, which shows the best way to provide “solar for all” is a system-wide approach where all power users share the benefits of solar-plus-storage financed through the statewide power system – similar to how we finance dirty plants.

Rooftop solar actually helps all customers ... by providing low-cost electricity to the utility during periods of high regional usage.

—NC WARN consulting engineer Bill Powers

add batteries – at an unspecified later date.

7. Penalizes affluent solar customers, too, by switching from the current, straightforward retail net metering to a complicated scheme in which customers are credited different amounts depending on the time of day they feed excess power to the grid. Some times of day would pay substantially less than the current retail value, and the highest credit would be earned during two periods when very little solar is produced.

8. Threatens NC’s growing rooftop solar industry. Solar sales would become more difficult because the complexities make it hard to calculate the payback period.

9. Mirrors efforts to kill rooftop solar in other states. California utilities are pressing for rule changes projected to double the payback period for solar homes and businesses, cost 50,000 jobs and wreck climate protection efforts.

Duke enjoys monopoly status in NC in exchange for being regulated by the NCUC. Now Duke is pressing regulators to throttle the only competition it faces: you!

Visit SaveNCSolar.org to learn how you can help 53 nonprofits & 15 solar companies protect our right to supply our own power and receive fair value for power we share with the grid.

revised 3/18/22