



**BUILDING PEOPLE POWER
FOR ENERGY & CLIMATE JUSTICE**

June 25, 2026

Honorable Josh Stein
Governor of North Carolina

Cc: Attorney General Jeff Jackson

Subject: As Data Center Scandal Grows, You Must Ban Duke Energy Monopoly from “24/7” Recruiting and Join Call for a Moratorium

Dear Governor Stein,

In a North Carolina Utilities Commission hearing last week, Duke Energy’s top executives admitted that they recruit the very data centers used to justify a [\\$63 billion expansion](#) of fossil fuels and nuclear power plants in the Carolinas. Duke’s leaders, in manufacturing the demand that they say necessitates a climate-wrecking, rate-hiking fossil fuel buildout, have killed their own case for expanding dirty power and suppressing far cheaper solar and battery storage.

You as Governor must personally step in to disallow the monopoly Duke Energy from recruiting power-hungry data centers and to publicly support a statewide moratorium on new data centers as called for by an expert with the NC Utilities Commission’s Public Staff.

That same expert decried Duke for prioritizing shareholders over ratepayers by overzealously signing new large load customers.

The facts that have now been exposed make it clear that Duke Energy is violating the public trust, and past Commissions have failed to challenge Duke Energy’s business model. Duke’s criminal corporate behavior is an abuse of its monopoly privilege and the very corporate charter that allows it to operate in North Carolina.

Now, the only question is: Who in authority will act upon this scandalous, anti-public behavior?

As revealed at the hearing, Duke Energy CEO Harry Sideris recently boasted to corporate investors, “We have a [recruiting] team in place that their goal, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, is *how do we get [data centers] signed quicker?*” Duke’s North Carolina president Kendal Bowman [confirmed](#) (1:03:00) that this same aggressive recruiting of energy-guzzling data centers is in use in NC.

Recruiting data centers clearly runs counter to the interests of the people of North Carolina; these developments have faced well-aimed backlash due to the many negative community impacts and creation of literally a handful of local jobs. Communities have been knocking down data center projects one after another, even before NC WARN’s attorney and others exposed Duke Energy’s role in driving the corporate-manufactured delirium.

Duke witnesses conceded that use of electricity has fallen over the long term despite huge population growth. They also admitted that the corporation has consistently exaggerated future projections for years while arguing that Duke must build a huge number of new power plants for electricity usage that ultimately never materializes.

Now, Duke leaders have been caught admitting that they're actively [recruiting new large customers](#) to try to justify the largest expansion of fossil fuels and experimental nuclear plants in the nation.

This is a scandal and crime being perpetrated against the people of North Carolina who are already struggling with soaring power bills, repeated devastation by storms and assaults on their communities by massive data center developers who provide almost no jobs after initial construction. It is outrageous that a state-sanctioned monopoly should be allowed to demand even higher profits by gouging the public with hefty rate hikes year after year.

A witness for the Utilities Commission's Public Staff [stated](#) (1:42:55) that Duke is acting in the interest of shareholders over ratepayers by overzealously signing new large load customers. The Public Staff now [recommends](#) (4:03:15) that the Commission impose a 1-year pause on new data centers and scrutinize new contracts for any future data centers.

NC WARN's expert witness, engineer Bill Powers, provided [evidence](#) in the proceeding – which Duke chose not to challenge – that local solar-plus-storage (SPS) can rapidly replace existing coal- and gas-fired power plants and avoid any new ones. Powers shows that the massive potential for local SPS in North Carolina could make it the fastest, cheapest and most equitable tool to move the state off its course toward climate and social chaos. That's based on a formal [Sharing Solar proposal](#) NC WARN sent to you, the Commission and others last year.

A Duke official conceded under oath that SPS has multiple benefits. A Public Staff witness said that Duke underestimated the potential for battery storage, and other witnesses showed that SPS could be built at less cost and would be more flexible than new gas or nuclear to handle any future growth in electricity demand.

We appreciate your recent public statement calling for an end to tax exemptions for electricity usage by data centers and for speaking out against Duke Energy's latest rate increases. Now, you must go much further by:

1. Challenging Duke's years-long abuse of its monopoly power by constantly raising rates to build more and more unneeded power plants;
2. Stopping Duke Energy from recruiting power-hungry data centers into its monopoly service territories; and
3. Implementing a statewide moratorium on new data centers as called for by the Utilities Commission's Public Staff.

We're calling for your immediate personal action because the NC Utilities Commission will not rule in the case for at least six months, and because the Commission has traditionally been heavily biased in favor of Duke Energy.

Communities are already bracing for hurricane and heatwave season as scientists escalate their warnings that the climate crisis will only worsen due to continuing inaction by rich countries and corporate polluters. North Carolinians need a leader they can trust to make a major course correction right now to avert continued assaults by data center developers and Duke Energy's constant rate hikes to fund its anti-public business model.

Thank you in advance for stepping up to this unique opportunity.

Sincerely,



Jim Warren
Executive Director