

November 24, 2015

Governor Pat McCrory
North Carolina Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Subject: Climate protection is a path to jobs

Dear Governor:

It has become increasingly clear that, due to rapid evolution of the electricity industry and the urgency of the climate crisis, all of the coal-fired power plants in North Carolina should and will be shut down in the near future – at a rate faster than Duke Energy or the state of North Carolina is presently prepared for. We are asking you to set up a “green ribbon” panel to recommend how North Carolina can assist coal plant employees to transition to the growing sector of green energy jobs in order to preserve North Carolina communities.

The pressure against coal plants is mounting due to air pollution, coal ash, the climate crisis and mining practices. The coal industry is rapidly going bankrupt and job opportunities are shifting alongside the changing electricity marketplace.

The US Energy Information Administration reported that, overall, fossil fuel power plant jobs were down 1% from 2011 to 2014 despite large growth in natural gas, and nuclear lost a stunning 9%, while solar jobs gained 200%.

At the seven remaining Duke Energy coal-fired power plants in North Carolina, there are approximately 2,000 employees, and the communities surrounding the plants are often majority poor, rural, and/or people of color. It is critical to ensure that the employees and the communities they live in are taken care of. The plant closures will be phased over time so jobs will also be phased out or transitioned over time.

In closing coal plants in the past, Duke Energy has offered early retirement packages, transferred workers to other Duke facilities and set up job training and transition services. The 1,860 employee reduction from the merger between Duke Energy and Progress was done systematically. However, our concerns are for both the workers and the communities in which they work.

The green ribbon panel should find ways to encourage local job replacement in the growing clean energy sector (such as solar sales and installation, building weatherization or energy conservation technology installation) and green manufacturing opportunities (such as manufacturing of solar system components, wind turbines, efficient lighting or alternative fuel vehicles).

The planning should focus not just on the employees, but also on each of the local economies the workers support. As an example of a framework for best practices during future plant closures, the closure of Mohave Generating Station in Arizona was followed by the majority owner of the plant, Southern California Edison, contributing funds to be invested in job retraining, local government programs, and development of renewable energy in the area surrounding the

existing plant to help reduce the burden on the communities.

New industry provides positive impacts on the local economy, and its tax base, but some industries are dirty and polluting, destroying property values and communities. New green manufacturing provides positive economic impact plus benefits to the environment.

We trust that you will agree that planning for the inevitable transition away from coal and creating clean energy jobs should be a high priority for your administration. North Carolina cannot take a pass, as it did when our textile industries collapsed, but should find ways to create a fair and just future economy.

Based on these factors and others to be explored and developed by the panel, we believe that proactively addressing this challenge can convert an increasingly uncertain future for the seven communities hosting coal-fired power plants into one that strengthens the workers, communities and North Carolina as a whole.

We welcome the opportunity to assist with this effort and work with representatives from the Department of Commerce, the Duke Energy industrial recruitment team, NC State University Extension Services, the NC State University Clean Technology Center and similar agencies. We will be glad to recommend individuals who are especially suited to be part of the panel who have experience in green job creation and local economies.

We look forward to working with you on this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



Jim Warren
Executive Director
NC WARN



Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II
President
NC NAACP

On behalf of:

Action NC
Beloved Community Center
Black Workers for Justice
Climate Voices US
Communications Workers of America LOCAL 3607
NC NAACP
NC WARN
North Carolina Environmental Justice Network
North Carolina Climate Justice Summit

cc. John E. Skvarla III, Secretary of Commerce
CEO Lynn Good, Duke Energy