

Press Release from North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA), Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE), the Sierra Club and the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC)

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### **Clean energy advocates propose lower-cost, lower-emission carbon plan option**

**RALEIGH, N.C.**—Several groups involved in the North Carolina Utilities Commission proceeding to develop a state plan to reduce heat-trapping carbon emissions from electricity generation-- known as the Carbon Plan-- filed their own proposal to reach the legislative mandate of 70% emissions reductions by 2030, and carbon neutrality by 2050. The proposal reaches the carbon mandates on time and does so in a more cost-effective manner than Duke Energy's own proposed plan filed two months prior.

In creating this plan, NC Sustainable Energy Association, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the Sierra Club, and the Southern Environmental Law Center contracted Synapse Energy Economics to model expansion and production costs identifying the most cost-effective resource pathway for North Carolina ratepayers. The modeling filed Wednesday at the NC Utilities Commission demonstrates significant cost savings compared to Duke's proposed carbon plan, while remaining on track to achieve 70% emissions reductions by the 2030 deadline. In fact, the clean energy advocates' model presented:

- Cost savings of 2-7% as compared to Duke's proposed scenarios by 2030 and 15-19% by 2050. The coalition's modeling shows savings between \$700 million - \$2.4 billion by 2030 and \$19.4 - \$24.6 billion by 2050 for ratepayers;
- No new gas combined-cycle or combustion turbine units, while also relying less on unproven, uncertain technologies like small modular nuclear reactors and hydrogen;
- Greater deployment of proven technologies like solar, storage, and wind to meet emission reduction mandates. The coalition's modeling selects 7.2 gigawatts of solar and 5.6 gigawatts of storage by 2030 as the most cost-effective path for meeting the 2030 carbon reduction mandates;



- Earlier retirements for 3.5 gigawatts of coal capacity as compared to Duke Energy's scenarios;
- Energy efficiency savings leading to 2% less energy required across the Duke Energy system by 2035 and 5% less by 2050 as compared to Duke's baseline assumptions;
- Portfolios meet load requirements across every hour modeled, maintaining a reliable grid across the state.

Read the full filing made on behalf of NC Sustainable Energy Association, Natural Resources Defense Council, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, the Sierra Club, and the Southern Environmental Law Center: <https://bit.ly/3S1f13Y>. The Synapse report with the aforementioned benefits can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3aS3KC8>

"The modeling filed by NCSEA and our partners demonstrates that cleaner, proven technologies are hands-down the best option for ratepayers," **said Peter Ledford, Director of Policy & General Counsel with NC Sustainable Energy Association.** "It should no longer be a question of cost versus carbon. We're now seeing that lower carbon technologies are some of the most cost-effective options across the board, as seen here, which resulted in 2-7% in additional savings for Duke customers."

"Duke's carbon plan is deeply flawed and relies too heavily on natural gas, nuclear energy, and risky investments in unproven technology. But this modeling shows that a less costly plan, which also significantly reduces emissions, is possible for North Carolina," **said Luis Martinez, Director of Southeast Energy at Natural Resources Defense Council.** "North Carolina already has the tools it needs to meet its 2030 carbon targets: energy efficiency, renewables and storage."

"The carbon plan is, ultimately, a climate plan. It's a major opportunity to shape the world we live in and raise our families in," **said Mikaela Curry, senior representative for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign in the Carolinas.** "North Carolina can, and must, fully transition from the dirty coal and fracked gas that poison our air and water and endanger the lives of Black, Indigenous and communities of color who bear the brunt of environmental pollution. We hope that after hearing directly from concerned customers across the state, and taking into account fact-based data from expert stakeholders, commissioners will adopt a plan that captures the full potential of energy efficiency and wind and solar power as cost-saving, emission-free resources that benefit people and the planet."

"Utility plans to invest in new gas power plants are risky on a number of fronts, particularly opening up customers to higher bills driven by volatile fuel prices and stranded assets," **said Maggie Shober, Research Director for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy.** "Our analysis shows that investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and storage are the best way to meet future electricity demand while managing the risk of higher customer bills in the future."



“This modeling proves that we can meet state carbon-reduction requirements on time and in a cleaner and more affordable way than suggested by Duke Energy. This new modeling also shows us a no-regrets pathway that benefits the growth of our clean energy economy and creates a healthier environment for North Carolinians,” **said David Neal, senior attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center.** “Relying more on low-cost renewable energy and treating energy efficiency as a priority resource will continue to make our grid stronger and more reliable, costing less on customer bills than Duke’s proposals while bringing us a lower carbon future.”

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#### **About the Southern Environmental Law Center**

The Southern Environmental Law Center is one of the nation’s most powerful defenders of the environment, rooted in the South. With a long track record, SELC takes on the toughest environmental challenges in court, in government, and in our communities to protect our region’s air, water, climate, wildlife, lands, and people. Nonprofit and nonpartisan, the organization has a staff of 170, including 90 attorneys, and is headquartered in Charlottesville, Va., with offices in Asheville, Atlanta, Birmingham, Chapel Hill, Charleston, Nashville, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. [www.southernenvironment.org](http://www.southernenvironment.org)

#### **About North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association**

North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association (NCSEA) is the leading 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that drives public policy and market development for clean energy. NCSEA's work enables clean energy jobs, economic opportunities, and affordable energy options for all North Carolinians. Learn more about NCSEA, its mission, and vision at [www.energync.org](http://www.energync.org)

#### **About the Sierra Club**

The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with millions of members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).

#### **About the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy**

Since 1985, the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy has worked to promote responsible and equitable energy choices to ensure clean, safe, and healthy communities throughout the Southeast. Learn more at [www.cleanenergy.org](http://www.cleanenergy.org).

**About the Natural Resources Defense Council**

NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, and Beijing. Visit us at [www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org) and follow us on Twitter @NRDC.