



March 10, 2022

The Honorable Roy Cooper  
Governor of North Carolina  
116 West Jones St.  
Raleigh, NC 27603

cc. Attorney General Josh Stein  
NC Utilities Commission

Subject: Protecting North Carolina's Growing Rooftop Solar Power Industry

Dear Governor Cooper:

The undersigned rooftop solar installers operating in North Carolina have serious concerns about Duke Energy's proposed changes to solar net metering contained in the petition submitted to the NC Utilities Commission on November 29, 2021. We believe the proposed changes could harm a growing industry on behalf of a single corporation, cause the loss of thousands of well-paying jobs in the North Carolina solar industry, threaten your climate goals and hurt all electricity customers by limiting the delivery of low-cost power to the grid.

In contrast to a key premise alleged by Duke Energy, rooftop solar is good for all electricity ratepayers by lowering the need for expensive fossil fuel power and providing low-cost power to the grid on a daily basis and particularly during periods of high demand. This has been proven in numerous studies in recent years including a 2020 study that South Carolina regulators relied on in ordering changes to Dominion Energy net metering that are far preferable to those sought by Duke Energy in our state.

**Job Losses and Threat to Our Businesses:** Rooftop solar is much more impactful than other types of electricity generation from an economic and jobs perspective. Many more jobs are created per megawatt installed, and we employ full-time staff while providing healthcare and strong benefits, all constituting an increasing boost to the North Carolina economy. Presently, a small percentage of North Carolina's solar power is in the rooftop sector, compared to other pro-solar states. We are poised to add thousands of jobs if we continue to grow our rooftop industry.

Our concerns have precedent in a number of other states. Currently, solar industry leaders in California project up to 50,000 job losses as solar becomes unaffordable to so many ratepayers as regulators propose to “change” net metering as requested by big utilities. Duke Energy’s Net Metering 2.0 proposal seems to be following the California utilities’ playbook. We ask that you help avoid the type of prolonged controversy that continues to beset California, Florida and other states, and help broker a plan that benefits all of North Carolina.

### *Complexity*

The time-of-use rates, critical peak pricing, minimum bill, complicated netting procedure, non-bypassable charges, and variable treatment of existing customers create such complexity that it would become quite difficult for us to model for our customers what the payback on their solar investment would be.

### *Discriminatory Treatment*

The proposed changes would discriminate against certain groups of ratepayers. First, owners of rooftop solar systems would be subject to additional fees not charged to other residential customers. In addition, the proposed incentive (Duke Energy’s Smart Saver proposal that would provide a rebate to solar customers who also install a smart thermostat) is available only to all-electric households, despite the fact that the demand response potential from a smart thermostat exists for any household that heats or cools with electricity, even if other appliances run on gas. Thus, the key incentive in Duke’s proposal would leave gas-using customers with a payback on their solar investment that’s years longer than those who are all-electric.

It is not fair that Duke Energy’s plan would reduce the value of solar production by 25-35% for the average consumer.

### *Drag on State Climate Goals*

At a time when your administration, the NC General Assembly and utilities have set goals for the electric power sector to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, it is inconsistent for Duke Energy to propose a policy that would slow the growth of clean energy.

Unlike the state's utility-scale solar development, which has slowed in recent years, the rooftop solar industry has been growing. We are proud to be helping achieve the climate and clean energy goals you have laid out for the state. Our industry's success has resulted in part from the current fair and straight-forward net metering arrangement.

Please continue your climate leadership by doing everything possible to protect and promote the continued growth of rooftop solar in North Carolina by ensuring that any changes to our

current solar net metering policies are fair to ratepayers and to all of the rooftop solar companies offering thousands of well-paying jobs across the state.

Thank you for attention to this timely matter. We look forward to your earliest possible reply.

Sincerely,

Robert and Maria Kingery  
Co-Owners  
Southern Energy Management  
Raleigh

Dave Hollister  
President  
Sundance Power Systems  
Weaverville

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