

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Broad Coalition of Justice, Health, Consumer, and Environmental Organizations Urge NC Utilities Commission to Deny Duke Energy's Proposed Rate Hike and Revoke its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity

Asheville, NC. – Twenty-five statewide organizations today sent members of the NC Utilities Commission a letter outlining the reasons for denying Duke Energy its proposed rate hike and requesting that the Commission halt construction of Cliffside #6. The coalition believes that a large proportion of the rate hike is to fund the construction of Cliffside which violates the Commission's obligation to "promote least cost energy planning...(and) provide just and reasonable rates."

If Cliffside #6 is allowed to become operational, it will release 6 million tons of CO₂ into the atmosphere, a damaging contribution to climate change that NC can ill afford. The recent release of a report by Physicians for Social Responsibility and the National Wildlife Federation highlight the vulnerability of North Carolina to the effects of rapidly accelerating climate change. Both Raleigh and Charlotte were ranked in the top 30 US cities most vulnerable to the harmful negative human effects of more severe heat waves. Wildlife and natural ecosystems including our coastal communities are particularly exposed to expected sea level rise and extreme weather events.

The letter reads "There is no doubt that building new power plants, such as Unit #6, will continue to increase our rates much more than by using energy more efficiently, increasing co-generation, and deploying renewable energy. According to Duke University economist John Blackburn, **Duke Energy's own data shows new plants can be avoided by modest increases in energy efficiency and with renewable sources of energy at levels already required in North Carolina.**"

Moreover, Duke is seeking to increase its profits by selling electricity outside of its designated service area in North Carolina, proving again that Cliffside #6 is an unnecessary burden on customers in NC already dealing with declining incomes.

June Blotnick, Director of Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, has said, "While electric rates in other parts of the country are plummeting, North Carolinians are being forced to pay for Duke's short-sighted investment in Cliffside. It's unfair to consumers who are already struggling to pay their bills and who will be stuck with more rate increases once climate legislation and a national renewable energy standard are approved by Congress."

According to Lew Patrie, M.D. "Western N. C. Physicians for Social Responsibility opposes Duke Energy's coal fired Cliffside power plant, that is now under construction. Coal combustion from the plant would release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere adding to the ever-increasing threat to human existence from global climate change. Furthermore mercury emissions into the air, water and soil from that plant would be especially detrimental to exposed fetuses, infants and children, placing them at risk for lifelong developmental defects."

The full text of the letter to members of the Utility Commission is attached.

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Public Hearings will take place across North Carolina in September.

- Charlotte: Wednesday, September 9
- Durham: Thursday, September 10
- High Point: Tuesday, September 15
- Marion: Thursday, September 17
- Franklin: Tuesday, September 22
- Raleigh: Monday, October 19