

Local Government Engagement Opportunities in the 2025-2026 Carbon Plan / Integrated Resource Plan

Overview and Background

In 2021, [House Bill 951](#) was passed by the North Carolina General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper, which directed the NC Utilities Commission (NCUC) to develop a Carbon Plan, with the electric public utilities and stakeholders, to achieve 70% emissions reduction by 2030, carbon neutrality by 2050, and make updates to the Carbon Plan every two years. While legislators passed [Senate Bill 266](#) in 2025, which eliminated the interim 2030 target, utilities must still achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

The [NCUC issued the state's first Carbon Plan](#) on December 30, 2022. In 2023, the NCUC merged the process with the Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process and opened a new docket (E-100 Sub 190) for the merged Carbon Plan Integrated Resource Plan (CPIRP). **The CPIRP has significant impacts on our communities' and local governments' ability to meet greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and resiliency goals in the most affordable way possible.**

Local governments are uniquely positioned to weigh in with the NCUC because (1) we are large utility customers, (2) our constituents make up the residential, commercial, and industrial customer base, and (3) we have seldom been represented at the NCUC, especially in utility resource planning. However, that began to change in 2020 as North Carolina's local governments formally and informally engaged at the NCUC:

In Duke Energy's 2020 15-year Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), 15 local governments¹ engaged before the NCUC:

- Three local governments, [the City of Asheville and Buncombe County](#) (jointly) and the [City of Charlotte](#), formally intervened.
- Elected officials of 11 North Carolina cities, towns, and counties provided input via a [joint letter](#), and the [City of Raleigh](#) and [Town of Cary](#) submitted individual letters.

In 2022, 12 local governments² participated in the first Carbon Plan proceeding, building off the momentum established in 2020:

¹ Asheville, Boone, Buncombe County, Carrboro Cary, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Durham, Durham County, Greensboro, Hillsborough, Matthews, Orange County, Raleigh, and Wilmington.

² Asheville, Boone, Buncombe County, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Chatham County, Durham, Durham County, Greensboro, Hillsborough, Matthews, and Raleigh.

- Three local governments, [the City of Asheville and Buncombe County](#) (jointly) and the [City of Charlotte](#), formally intervened.
- Elected officials of 8 North Carolina cities, towns, and counties provided input via a [joint letter](#), and [Durham County](#) submitted an individual letter.

In 2024, 13 local governments³ participated in the first CPIRP proceeding. Those governments that participated learned from previous years of coordinated comments and interventions:

- Three local governments, the [City of Asheville and Buncombe County \(jointly\)](#) and the [City of Charlotte](#), formally intervened.
- Elected officials of 10 North Carolina cities, towns, and counties provided input via a [joint letter](#).

Duke Energy's Proposal

In Duke Energy's 2025 CPIRP proposal submitted to the NCUC, it recommends one pathway to meet their massive load growth projections for the next 20 years. This plan includes, but is not limited to, an increase in natural gas generation, delayed retirement dates for coal power plants, reduced solar buildout, more battery storage, and the complete elimination of any long-term planning for onshore or offshore wind or hydroelectric resources. (In contrast, in 2023, Duke proposed three different energy resource portfolios to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, utilizing a mix of solar, battery storage, onshore/offshore wind, nuclear, and natural gas, while retiring coal plants by 2035.)

While the 2030 interim carbon reduction target was repealed, Duke Energy's current CPIRP proposal would make it extremely difficult and costly to meet the 2050 carbon-neutrality statutory requirement.

Importance of Engagement

The CPIRP is an important opportunity for local governments to collaborate with and provide unique input to the NCUC, Duke Energy, and other stakeholders/interveners to ensure our towns, cities, counties, and our citizens achieve our own goals related to emission reductions, renewable energy, resilience, and affordability. Over the last five years, North Carolina local governments have engaged in numerous stakeholder processes across different venues, including those directed by House Bill 589 (2017) and Governor Cooper's Executive Order 80 (2018), as well as Duke Energy-led meetings to develop various customer programs. Engaging in these important venues ensures the voice and needs of local governments are represented as these long-lasting decisions that will impact our communities and citizens are being made.

³ Asheville, Boone, Buncombe County, Chapel Hill, Charlotte, Chatham County, Davidson, Durham, Durham County, Greensboro, Hillsborough, Orange County, and Raleigh.

Joint Letter to the NCUC

A group of local governments have been developing a joint letter to submit to the NC Utilities Commission that encourages a CPIRP that will provide affordable, reliable energy to constituents without compromising our clean energy and resiliency goals. This includes expanding energy efficiency and demand-side management programs, the retirement of Duke's coal fleet, increased integration of renewables and energy storage, greater access to utility customer programs that allow the procurement of renewable energy that goes beyond statutory requirements, and long-term energy procurement planning for proven renewable technologies such as offshore wind.

We aim to finalize this letter in February/March of 2026 and maximize its impact on Utilities Commissioners with as many local governments' signatures as possible. If your city/town/county is considering signing, we encourage you to sign as Mayor or County Commission Chair. For more information, please contact [Emily Morrow](#) (SSDN) and [Zach Ambrose](#) (NC Cities Initiative). **We aim to confirm signatures by March 27, 2026.**

NC Utilities Commission's 2025-2026 CPIRP Timeline

- **October 1, 2025:** Duke Energy filed its proposed Carbon Plan / Integrated Resource Plan (CPIRP) at the NCUC
- **February - March 2026:** NCUC to conduct public hearings across the state
 - 2/4/26: Durham, 7 pm (Durham County Courthouse, 510 S Dillard St)
 - 3/4/26: Wilmington, 7 pm (New Hanover County Courthouse, 316 Princess St)
 - 3/16/26: Webex, 6:30 pm (hearing available at www.ncuc.gov)
 - 3/17/26: Asheville, 7 pm (Buncombe County Courthouse, 60 Court Plaza)
 - 3/18/26: Charlotte, 7 pm (Mecklenburg County Courthouse, 832 E 4th St)
- **March 27, 2026:** Target date for local governments' Joint Letter to be submitted to the NCUC
- **March 30, 2026:** Deadline to formally intervene in the CPIRP proceeding, file comments regarding Duke Energy's proposed CPIRP, and/or file their own CPIRP
- **June 9, 2026:** Evidentiary hearing begins (Commission Hearing Room 2115, Second Floor, Dobbs Building, 430 N Salisbury St, Raleigh)
- **December 31, 2026:** Deadline for the NCUC to issue its order