

Proposed methane gas power plants in Person County

This packet includes:

- Information about Duke Energy's proposed methane gas plants power
- Tips on preparing to speak a public hearing or writing a written comment
- What to expect when speaking at a public hearing
- How to submit a written comment

What is Duke Energy planning?

Duke Energy has proposed building two new methane gas power plants near the site of its existing coal power plant in Person County. These new gas plants would begin operating in 2029.

Who decides if the plant is built?

The North Carolina Public Utilities Commission, the state agency that regulates utilities, will decide whether or not Duke Energy can build the plant. The decision-making process for the first gas plant is beginning now.

Do community members have a say?

Yes, community members can share their views with the commission at a public hearing at **7 p.m. on Thursday, June 13** at the Person County Courthouse, Superior Courtroom (105 South Main Street, Roxboro).

How will the NC Utilities Commission decide whether Duke can build the plant?

When deciding whether or not the gas plant will be built, the NC Utilities Commission will consider:

1. Whether the gas plant is part of the **least-cost** path to meet state electricity goals
2. Whether the gas plant **maintains or improves upon the adequacy and reliability** of the existing grid
3. Whether building the gas plant is in the **public interest**

Is this gas plant the least-cost pathway for meeting our electricity needs?

- **Building more gas plants is risky for customer bills.**
 - Methane gas prices are unpredictable, and price spikes are paid for by customers through their high electricity bills.
 - High methane gas prices have driven up electricity bills in NC. Increases in methane gas prices have caused 46% of electricity price increases for residential customers in Duke Energy Progress territory since 2017.
- **Gas plants are expensive and paid for by Duke customers.**
 - The cost of building new gas plants is passed on to customers through higher electricity bills—with a built-in profit for Duke.
 - The cost of the proposed gas plant is hidden from the public. Duke spent \$817 million to build a much smaller gas plant in Asheville, suggesting that this larger plant could cost even more.
- **The gas plant will require expensive upgrades, need to run less often, or be at risk of closing early.**
 - The original proposal for this gas plant did not consider changes to federal environmental regulations, which will reduce air pollution and require the plant to either operate less efficiently than it was designed to, take on expensive upgrades, or close early.
 - A new federal regulation would require the gas plant to either use currently expensive carbon capture and storage technology (which is unlikely to work in North Carolina due to our geology and the captured carbon dioxide would need to be sent out of state by new pipelines) or run much less efficiently or often than it was designed to skirt the threshold that would require carbon capture.
 - Duke Energy has said that it plans on converting the gas plant to burn hydrogen. However, hydrogen is unproven at scale in North Carolina.
 - The future cost and availability of hydrogen is very uncertain, and upgrading gas plants to hydrogen could be very expensive. Upgrading the plant to run from 100% hydrogen would also require new hydrogen pipelines to be built.
- **Solar and wind are a more cost-effective alternative to gas plants.**
 - Building solar and wind instead of gas would have less of an impact on customer bills.

Is a methane gas plant the best solution for reliable electricity?

- During Winter Storm Elliot in 2022, half a million people across North Carolina lost power due to rolling blackouts. During the storm, **63% of lost power across the Eastern U.S. was because of failures with methane gas generation.**
- Failures of methane gas infrastructure were also a main cause of blackouts during four other extreme winter weather events across the past 12 years.

Is the gas plant in the public interest?

- The proposed gas plants would require a **new methane gas pipeline**, which would impact properties in Person County.
 - Pipelines can explode and catch fire without warning, causing injuries, deaths, and millions of dollars in damages. On average in the U.S. across the past 13 years, a fire occurs every 4.2 days, an injury every 6.5 days, and nearly \$1.6 million worth of property damage is incurred from pipeline incidents.
 - The pipeline is proposed to be built near an elementary school.
- Person County is already burdened by **environmental pollution**. This community has already been impacted by the coal plant's air pollution and coal ash leaching into groundwater.
 - Public health data show that residents in this area have a higher risk of cancer in their lifetime from air pollution than the state average, despite being a rural area away from cities & traffic.
- Building a new gas plant is **inconsistent with a bipartisan state law** that requires Duke to reduce carbon emissions.
 - Duke should focus on removing emitting sources from its electric generation, not adding more that will have to either undergo expensive upgrades to burn hydrogen or get turned off in 2050, 7-12 years earlier than the normal 25 to 30-year lifespan of a major power plant.

Tips on speaking at a public hearing or writing a written comment

General Advice to Keep in Mind

- If you plan on speaking at a hearing, write your testimony ahead of time to read during the hearing.
- **Establish your authority early**, either as an impacted community member, or formal expert. Share why your experience is relevant to the proposed gas plant.
- **Speak/write from your own experience.**
- **Stay on topic.** Keep your comment about this specific gas plant.
- **Be concise.** If you are planning to speak at the hearing, keep in mind that your speaking time may be limited to 3 minutes. However, you are allowed to submit a longer written comment.

Before you start writing your comment

Take a minute to consider what experiences you have had that inform your perspective on the gas plant. Why and how do these experiences inform your perspective? Take some notes about ways your specific experience is unique and relevant.

Examples of relevant personal experience:

- **Do you live or work near a coal plant or gas pipeline?** If so, how does this infrastructure impact you? Do you have asthma, COPD, heart disease, or any other diseases that are linked to exposure to pollution from power plants?
- **Do you have a difficult time paying your utility bills?** If you aren't currently having difficulty paying energy bills, was there a time in the past when energy bills were a financial burden?
- **Were you impacted by the Winter Storm Elliot Blackouts or another power outage?** How did this event impact you?
- **Do you have a health issue that would make a power outage more dangerous for you** (i.e. are you reliant on any electric equipment for health needs)?
- **Do you have a community leadership role?** Can you share expertise on your community, relevant local issues and attitudes? For example, sharing your role in the community (i.e. pastor, teacher, local politician, professor, coach, etc.) may lend you credibility to the commission.
- **Do you have relevant professional expertise and training** that relates to the credibility of your comment? For example, if you are an MD speaking to health issues, have electricity expertise, relevant advanced degrees, etc.

Steps in preparing your comment:

1

Identify who you are and why this proposed gas plant is relevant to you.

- Identify yourself as an electric customer (either a Duke Energy or electric cooperative customer). The commission may ask for your physical address.
- OPTIONAL - Identify if you live near the proposed plant (for example in Roxboro or Person County). If so, do you or your family have any health conditions that are linked to air pollution (such as asthma, COPD, heart disease, etc.).
- OPTIONAL - If you have any formal expertise or training that is relevant to the subject matter you are commenting on, include your professional credentials, area of expertise, and years in the field.
- OPTIONAL - Do you own or operate a business in North Carolina or Person County? You can also speak to how the gas plant impacts you as a business owner.

2

Make your case. Clearly communicate your major concerns, priorities, and what decision you would like the Commission to make about this gas plant.

This is an opportunity to clearly and concisely communicate your main concerns about the proposed gas plant.

- **What about the gas plant are you concerned about?**
- **What action would you like the Commission to take?** For example, deny the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity.

3

Speak to how your concern(s) relate to your experience and/or expertise.

- How do you see yourself or your community being impacted by the proposed gas plant?
 - If you are concerned about health impacts what specifically are you concerned about?
 - If you are concerned about financial impacts, how would increased bills affect you and your life?
- Have you been impacted by power plants in the past?

4

Back yourself up!

- If you include statements that aren't directly speaking to your personal experience, feel free to include supporting evidence, facts, and sources (such as scientific articles, reports, news articles, high electric bills, etc.), to back yourself up.

5

What action do you want the commission to take?

- Clearly state what decision you would like the Commission to make about the proposed gas plant. For example, *“please deny the certificate of public convenience and necessity for this gas plant.”*

6

Thank the commission for the opportunity to speak.



Testimony Checklist:



Is everything included in your testimony relevant?



Is your testimony clearly organized?



Is the writing clear?



Do you provide useful information?



Is the tone respectful?

No insults or expressions of opinion about the NCUC.



If you plan on speaking at the hearing, is your testimony brief?

If you plan on speaking at the hearing, aim for 3 minutes when reading out loud. Note that longer comments can be shared with the commission in writing, but the portion you read out loud in the hearing may be limited.



Bring a written copy of your testimony to the hearing.

Speaking at a Public Hearing

You may want to reference the **NCUC's instructions on giving public testimony** ahead of time.

- Bring a written copy of your testimony.
- Arrive early, the hearing will begin promptly at 7 p.m.
- You'll need to sign up on a sheet in the hearing room before giving testimony. The commission will use the sign-up sheet to call on speakers.
- You'll be sworn in prior to giving your testimony to affirm that your comment is truthful.
- There will likely be a time limit for your testimony (typically **3 minutes**).
- You can submit longer comments in writing, but written testimony should be submitted when you go up to speak at the hearing.
- During your testimony, don't address others in the room except for the commissioners or ask questions.



ROXBORO PUBLIC HEARING

7 p.m., Thursday, June 13
Person County Courthouse,
Superior Courtroom
105 South Main Street, Roxboro

[RSVP to get a reminder about the hearing.](#)

Submitting a written comment:

If you aren't able to attend the public hearing, you can also submit a written comment by mail or online.

To submit a comment online, visit www.ncuc.gov/contactus.html and reference Docket No. E-2, Sub 1318 / EC-67, Sub 55. Comments can also be mailed to the North Carolina Utilities Commission, 4325 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300 and reference Docket No. E-2, Sub 1318 / EC-67, Sub 55.

Questions? Email Naomi Albert, North Carolina Field Coordinator, at naomi@appvoices.org



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