

Proven Solar Power Program Lands on Durham Rooftops

Solarize Durham will counter Duke Energy's drive to keep raising rates – by making solar power cheaper and easier than ever

NC WARN has launched in Durham a highly successful program that expands solar power on homes and businesses, cuts greenhouse gases, adds local jobs, helps avoid more rate increases for all customers – and which will soon expand across North Carolina.

The Durham-based clean energy nonprofit announced Solarize Durham today at a press conference at the office of Yes! Solar Solutions, a locally-owned company that is one of North Carolina's leading solar companies and which has been chosen to install systems for Solarize Durham.

NC WARN said Solarize Durham will help customers generate most of their own electricity and use any excess power to offset purchases from Duke Energy. They said the Solarize model has proven highly successful in dozens of U.S. communities since 2009, and is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Energy and the NC Solar Center. It will use high-quality equipment endorsed by the Solar Center.

Through bulk purchasing and neighbor-to-neighbor marketing, Solarize programs cut up to 32% from solar prices that have already fallen by 80% in recent years. NC WARN says power bill savings start the day the system is installed, locking in low-cost clean energy for 25 years or more.

"We've already generated a big preliminary response," said Rita Leadem of NC WARN today. *"Even before launching the program, our organizers have begun working with neighborhood leaders in Durham. It's clear that many people have been ready to 'go solar' ... and the time is now."*

She said the program will also pioneer a way to share solar power with low-income homeowners, and that a later announcement will be made on that aspect of the project.

Yes! Solar Solutions vice president Kathy Miller said today, *"We are honored to be a partner in the Solarize Durham program. Our mission intersects with NC WARN in our goal to make solar accessible to as many homeowners as possible. The Solarize program model has proven to increase solar awareness in communities both before and after the program for all installers, and we expect to see that in this market as well."*

With Solarize, the more customers who participate, the lower the price is for everyone. An average-sized home might use a 3-kilowatt system costing under \$4,000 – after federal and state tax credits – assuming strong participation in the program.

NC WARN says Solarize Durham helps all customers by undercutting Duke Energy's case for continually raising rates to build giant power plants. And Solarize programs

have consistently helped build the entire local solar industry, creating good jobs, reducing utility bills and replacing climate-wrecking coal and fracking gas.

Jim Warren of NC WARN said today, *“While Duke Energy pretends to support solar – but is actually trying to gut the industry – Solarize Durham will help counter Duke’s plans to keep raising rates to build unneeded power plants.”*

He said NC WARN will soon expand Solarize to other areas of the state with the help of members and partners. *“This will help the state economy by putting people to work and stemming the seemingly endless rise in electricity rates under Duke Energy and subsidiary Progress Energy,”* Warren added.

From: NC WARN <ncwarn@ncwarn.org>

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