

*****SPAM*** For Immediate Release**



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From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

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Greetings:

With no meetings in Raleigh this week, Senator Waddell participated in District activities. She participated in a school technology meeting with school administrators and the Governor, and a meeting with Kamala Harris, the Vice President of the United States.

Joyce Waddell

Energy Policy

State regulators are combing through mountains of data and widely varied energy plans now in a process that will ultimately chart North Carolina's climate and for customers' wallets, as Duke Energy, environmentalists, and consultants for many of the state's largest companies, pitch regulators on their preferred answers to a key question: As North Carolina phases out coal-fired electricity plants, what should take their place?

Charlotte-based Duke Energy, one of the world's largest energy companies and North Carolina's biggest provider, has backed a mix of natural gas, solar energy, wind and next-generation nuclear power. There is a plan to eventually burn a mix of natural gas and hydrogen in its proposed new gas plants—a technology Duke Energy planning documents assume is at least a decade away.

It is believed that natural gas should play a complimentary role. This energy diversity is what keeps the lights on when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing.

This planning is required by House Bill 951, a landmark energy bill that passed in the statehouse last year with widespread bipartisan support. The measure calls for the industry to create reasonable steps to cut carbon dioxide emissions from Duke Energy's power plants by 70%, compared to 2005 levels, by 2030. The N.C. Utilities Commission, which regulates Duke Energy, decides what's reasonable, and the law charges commissioners with finding the "least-cost path" to the 70% goal. The measure also allows for delays beyond 2030 if the commission signs off on complex wind or nuclear power projects that take longer to bring online.

The commission's process works much like a court case, with the seven commission members acting as judge and jury. Duke Energy, environmental groups and dozens of other businesses and interest groups are currently in the process of filing briefs for board members to consider. That includes Walmart, the retail giant, which says in its brief that electricity is one of its single largest costs.

Suicide Lifeline

On Saturday, the universal mental health crisis hotline — 988 — went live across the nation. The idea behind the shift from the 10-digit National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to the three-digit mental health crisis number is that it’s easy to remember - similar to the easy-to-remember 911 - and will be the same everywhere. The idea is to put people who call 988 in touch with a trained crisis counselor, who in many cases can help de-escalate the situation over the phone or direct the caller to additional mental health support. If the caller is still in need of immediate help, a mobile crisis team of mental health professionals will respond, North Carolina health officials have explained.

In anticipation of the 988 rollout, a DHHS representative said the state began investing in the call center and other resources necessary to launch the universal crisis line in 2020 during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. North Carolina set up the statewide Hope4NC helpline for disaster relief and co-located it with the state-based Suicide Prevention Lifeline call center. The state along with North Carolina health systems have continued to launch more mobile crisis units as well.

State lawmakers passed a budget last month that directs \$1.3 million in annual funding for the 988 call center. Earlier this year, North Carolina received a \$3.3 million federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration to help with the launch of 988 as well. The state will monitor the early data on a monthly basis to see how the state is keeping up with demand for the 988 hotline.

School Visit

Senator Waddell participates in a meeting at a local school with some members of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity and the Governor to discuss technology improvements.



Senator Waddell is working tirelessly for Senate District 40, but she cannot do this alone. Many of her precincts have changed which makes the election much more competitive. In November she will have an opponent against her. Can she count on your help to continue working for the district?

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Mecklenburg Delegation

Senator Waddell and members of the Mecklenburg legislative delegation participates in conversations with the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, about various issues within NC. Women's rights, affordable internet program (Affordable Connectivity Program, and other initiatives for the state.



Summer has brought the full weight of the season and it has been very hot outside, please stay hydrated. A very contagious strain of COVID is going around so be careful as you move around in the community.

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