

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAM PROPOSED

North Carolina has taken the initial step in providing its citizens with cleaner sources of power. On May 31, several state electric utilities filed a proposal with the North Carolina Utilities Commission for the adoption of the NC GreenPower program, offering consumers the option of paying a small monthly premium to ensure that a portion of their electric power is generated from renewable resources.

The NC GreenPower program is designed to boost the production of "green power"--electric power generated from renewable sources of electricity, such as wind, solar energy, water and biomass--by creating a market and an incentive for companies to develop and sell it. Current market conditions make it too expensive for companies to profitably develop and sell such alternative sources of electricity. Typically, "renewables" emit no or fewer pollutants at the point of power generation and are considered better for the environment than traditional fuel sources such as coal.

"With this NC GreenPower plan, we have an opportunity to help meet our state's present and future energy needs in sustainable ways," said Larry Shirley, director of the State Energy Office and a member of the NC GreenPower advisory committee. The State Energy Office supports and promotes energy efficiency programs and renewable energy technologies and has a key role in the development of the NC GreenPower program.

Under this program, electric customers could elect to pay an extra \$4 a month for blocks of electricity produced from renewable resources. The electric utilities, under special "tariffs" (applications for green power rates), would agree to purchase that amount of electricity from N.C. companies that produce electricity from renewable resources.

The Utilities Commission will receive public comments on the plan and tariffs before deciding whether to approve them. The NC GreenPower program could launch within six months of approval. If NC GreenPower is approved, North Carolina will become the first state in the nation to offer a statewide green pricing program, available to all electric consumers with participation from all of the state's electric utilities--Carolina Power & Light (CP&L), Duke Power, and Dominion North Carolina Power. Some Electricities and North Carolina electric cooperatives will also participate.

Advanced Energy, a non profit corporation that works in the area of energy efficiency, will administer the program.

Additional information on NC GreenPower can be found at the following Web site:

<http://www.advancedenergy.org/greenpower/index.html>

For additional national perspectives about green power programs visit:

<http://www.eren.doe.gov/greenpower/home.shtml>