SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY
SANTEE COOPER

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IN RE:	)	TRANSCRIPT
	)	
PROPOSED RATE	)	OF
ADJUSTMENT	)	
	)	PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING
	)	
	)	
	)	

Date: July 27, 2026

Time: 5:59 p.m.

Location: Santee Cooper Headquarters Auditorium,

1 Riverwood Drive, Moncks Corner, South Carolina

Reported by
Julie Taradash

APPEARANCES

Santee Cooper Board of Directors Present:
Charles S. Bennett, II, 1st District
Brian C. Frerichs, 5th District
Chad T. Lowder, Ex Officio Member
Stephen H. Mudge, Director-at-Large
Alyssa L. Richardson, 6th District
David F. Singleton, Horry County
John S. West, Berkeley County
Hugh L. Willcox, Jr., 7th District

Santee Cooper Executive Team:
Jimmy Staton,
President and CEO
Tami Wilson,
Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Carmen Thomas,
Vice President,Chief Legal Officer, and General Counsel
Mike Finissi,
Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer

Staff Members Present:
Lindsey Whitley,
Corporate Secretary and Associate General Counsel
Emily Tyner,
Manager Corporate Communications
Devin Ritter,
Manager of Pricing
Mollie Gore,
Director Corporate Communications and External Affairs
Shawan Gillians,
Senior Director Communications and Community
Bryan Lewis,
Director Customer Service Retail
Stephanie Burgess,
Senior Manager Retail Services and Customer Experience
Marty Watson,
Senior Director Commercial and Customer Service
Greg McCormack,
Senior Director of Financial Planning

Staff Members Present (Continued):

Chad Hutson,
Director of Wholesale and Industrial Services
Jack Stewart,
Deputy Chief Law Enforcement and Security
Tracy Vreeland,
Public Relations Specialist III
Gleason Deluca,
Customer Experience Analyst III
Jennifer Dittbenner,
Senior Customer Service Representative
Alexander McKay, III,
Manager Commercial Energy Services
John Calhoun,
Senior Financial Analyst
Rebecca Roser,
Associate General Counsel
Kate Wink,
Government Relations
Kearney Gregory,
Local Government and Economic Development
Jack Grooms,
Financial Analyst II
Brittany Rabon,
Administrative Associate
Kristin Bennett,
Financial Analyst II

Office of Regulatory Staff:

Donna Rhaney, Senior Counsel and Legislative Liaison
Stig Rasmussen, Staff Attorney
Jasmine Gunning, Staff Attorney
Shane Hyatt, Program Manager

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PROCEEDINGS

MS. WILSON: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to Santee Cooper's rate adjustment public comment meeting. This meeting is called to order. For your awareness, this is a public meeting. A court reporter is present and is transcribing the meeting to create a public record.

I'm Tami Wilson, Santee Cooper's Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. Up here with me are Carmen Thomas, Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, and General Counsel; and Greg McCormack, Senior Director of Financial Planning.

As we get underway, just a reminder for your safety, the emergency exits are on either side up here behind the stage. I now ask that you please stand and join me in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Group stands and recites the Pledge of Allegiance.)

MS. WILSON: Next up is Jimmy Staton, our President and CEO, who is going to say a few words.

MR. STATON: Thanks, Tami. First of all, I want to welcome each of you-all. Thank you for coming here tonight. We want to educate you as much as we can about our rate adjustment. But I want to talk first about Santee Cooper. Santee Cooper is owned by the State of South Carolina. You own us, and we work for you every single day. So every decision that we make, including, unfortunately, this rate adjustment, is rooted in our commitment to always deliver reliable, affordable power that helps improve the -- the lives of our customers.

In just the last three years, Santee Cooper has added over 17,000 retail customers. This growth is in part why we're here. And we're also seeing increasing electric demand from existing customers as our world becomes more -- ever more increasingly electrified. These two factors contributed to six record high peak -- demand peaks on our system in 2026 already. And we're not done. We're -- we're barely halfway through the year.

Reliable electric service isn't optional. It's a standard that you, our customers, rightly expect and you all deserve. For that reliability to continue, we need to proactively invest in maintaining what we have today and to strategically expand our generation, our transmission, and our distribution systems to keep your lights on for tomorrow. We want to make these improvements within the current rates, but unfortunately, the math on that just did not work. Customer demand is increasing and at the same time, inflation is driving up the cost of materials we need to reliably deliver the additional power that you-all are using.

Still, we are taking steps to reduce costs. For instance, we are locating a new -- or existing -- we're adding new generation at existing generation locations so that we don't have to deal with the cost of developing new property and we can take advantage of the existing infrastructure that's already in place. We're partnering with other utilities and developers so that we can continue to develop economies of scale. And we can -- we can -- that will lower costs, and we can provide those -- those cost savings back to our customers.

We're strategically investing in new technology such as battery storage that we can charge off the -- we can charge off the grid when customer demand is low and deploy across our transmission system when demand peaks. This technology will reduce how much new generation we need and therefore continue to lower costs.

As for -- as for generation, we're expanding our natural gas station in Anderson County to capture waste heat and use that to generate additional power without having to increase our fuel costs. We're also adding two smaller gas units at the Winyah Station in Georgetown, and those are designed to ramp up quickly to help meet peak energy demand.

But even with all of these mitigation efforts, our costs continue to exceed our ability to cover them under the current rates. But putting off these system investments puts our reliability at risk.

Proactive maintenance is an important tool in our cost savings toolkit. It's like maintaining your car. Regular oil changes and new tires cost money, but they help prevent breakdowns and keep your -- your car running safely and reliably. Our electric system also needs ongoing care. Investing in maintenance today helps prevent costly failures and unexpected outages tomorrow. And just as you need a larger car over time to carry your growing families, Santee Cooper is updating and expanding our system to serve new and existing customers. These are the kinds of solutions we work for every day to make sure we're giving you the best possible return on your dollars.

We recognize that costs are going up everywhere and for everyone, and Santee Cooper's full focus is on keeping costs as low as possible for you, our customers. This proposed adjustment would add less than 25 cents a day to the typical residential bill in 2027 with a similar increase in 2028. Your bills will still be lower than those of other large utilities in South Carolina and across the Southeast.

But we understand affordability means different things to different customers, and that's why we'll continue to work with you on ways you can manage your costs. You'll be able to reduce your monthly bill by adjusting when you use the most power, and you'll hear more shortly about a few changes we're proposing based on the feedback we've already gotten from customers. We also have a number of rebate and energy management programs that can help you reduce your bills. We have flyers you can take with you that offer more information on those programs, and we have customer service representatives here today who can answer questions you might have.

And as I -- as I said at the start, Santee

Cooper belongs to the people of South Carolina. Thanks for being here today, and we look forward to your comments. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Jimmy. Today's meeting agenda is as follows: We will make additional introductions, give an overview of the retail rate process and the need for the adjustment, and then we'll move into the public comment portion of the meeting beginning with an overview of tonight's process and the opening for public comments.

For the record, notice of the proposed rate adjustment and this meeting complies with FOIA under South Carolina Code Section 58-31-710. Written notice was provided on May 1st via first class mail or electronically to customers. Notice was also provided via the press news release and on Santee Cooper's website. And notice of this meeting was posted online and provided to the media 24 hours in advance.

I'd like to introduce Mike Finissi, who is our Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer. We also have members of Santee Cooper's Board here with us tonight to listen to your comments. So Members of our Board here tonight include Director Charles Bennett representing the 1st District;

Representative Brian Frerichs representing the 5th District; Ex Officio Director Chad Lowder, who represents Central Electric Cooperative; Director Stephen Mudge, Director-At-Large; Director Alyssa Richardson representing the 6th District; Director David Singleton representing Horry County; Director John West representing Berkeley County; and Dr. Hugh -- or Director Hugh Willcox representing the 7th District. So for the record, a quorum of the Board is present.

I'd also like to acknowledge that we do have individuals here from the Office of Regulatory Staff: Donna Rhaney, Stig Rasmussen, Jasmine Gunning, and Shane Hyatt. Thank y'all for coming.

So the purpose of this meeting is to receive input from you, our customers, relating to the proposed rate adjustments. We're looking forward to hearing your comments. We are receiving information in this meeting only with respect to the proposed rate adjustments. If you have questions about your existing account, as Jimmy mentioned, Santee Cooper customer service representatives are present outside to assist you.

With regard to the proposed rate adjustments, no deliberations will be conducted, no decision will be made today, and no votes will be taken. Before we begin taking public comments, we have a brief overview of the process and the need for the proposed rate adjustments. I'm going to turn it over to Greg to walk us through that.

MR. MCCORMACK: All right. Thank you, Tami. And thank you, everyone, for your interest in Santee Cooper's proposed rate adjustment. My comments tonight follow the one-page handout that you received when you arrived, specifically this one.

Before I begin, I want to encourage anyone who hasn't done so to visit the rate study website. There you can find a variety of materials and our presentation to the Board of Directors on May 1st of this year about the proposed rates. The presentation begins around the three-hour mark of the Board meeting and can be found by going to "About" and then "Leadership" from the home page. We also have full schedules, the actual rate study, and management reports available for in-person review at the front customer service table.

So let's start with why rates are increasing. As a state-owned utility, Santee Cooper's rates are based on our actual cost of -- cost to serve customers compared to the revenues we expect to collect. When our costs are higher than our revenues, we must adjust rates.

For a public electric utility like Santee Cooper, the cost to serve is called "revenue requirements." This includes our operating expenses, debt payments, a capital contribution that supports investments that we're making in the system, a small fee in lieu of taxes. And what you don't find in this calculation is profit because our business is not designed to make a profit.

Because our system has not needed significant changes for a while, we're investing heavily in upgrading or building projects to move power from our generating stations to your homes and businesses or the transmission system. We're also adding new generation to meet the growing needs of our customers. These investments are costly but are essential to ensure we can deliver power to our customers when they need it.

We've been receiving questions about cost control measures at Santee Cooper, so I wanted to quickly mention some of the things that we're doing to lower costs to our customers. In '24 and '25, we refinanced debt that generated about $220 million of savings with about $7 million a year of that occurring in these rate years, '27 and '28. We've also worked with some of our large customers to find new opportunities to avoid building generation by having them reduce their usage at our peaks, which saves the system around $75 million a year. These savings get passed directly on to the customers.

On the handout, you can see the "Overall Rate Adjustment" section shows our proposed adjustments. We've worked hard to keep these proposed adjustments at inflationary levels. You can also see the impact on different customer classes. We sometimes get asked why the residential class has a higher increase than, for example, industrial customers. The answer to that question is that costs are allocated to customer classes based on the costs they cause the system to incur. Residential customers tend to use energy more during Santee Cooper's peak times when electricity is more expensive to produce, and the allocation of costs to different classes reflects that fact. The bottom of the handout explains this concept in more detail.

The back of the handout explains demand, which is a common rate design concept used to align costs customer -- customers cause on the system with the customers responsible for those costs. As shown on the handout, demand is a concept of how much our customers are using in any given hour compared to energy, which is how much is used during a month. Santee Cooper uses a windowed demand that only captures customer usage during a three-hour period that coincides with the time when customers are using the system the most.

In 2025, Santee Cooper changed our rate structure so that some of the costs that were previously recovered through energy sales are now being recovered through customer demand. This is intended to align the recovery of costs with the customers that are causing those costs, primarily because a significant portion of the costs we incur during the demand window are not necessarily based on how much a customer uses the rest of the month.

The demand charge also creates a great opportunity for customers. When a customer reduces their use during times when energy is most expensive to produce, the demand charge automatically rewards that customer for creating these savings through a lower bill.

We did hear feedback from customers that demand was not something they were used to managing and that some of our customers had concern over a single high-use period in a month either causing a surprise bill or eroding the savings that they were aiming to achieve during the month.

As a result of that feedback, our proposed rates include a change called "Balanced Demand Billing." Instead of billing demand based on a single highest hour usage, the new Balanced Demand Billing includes a charge for the average of a customer's maximum hourly use during the four highest peak periods during a month.

Lastly, I want to note that Santee Cooper also has a rate offering for customers that does not include a demand charge, which is the Residential Time-of-Use rate. If demand billing isn't the right fit, we provide this alternative so customers can choose the rate that best meets their needs.

I'm going to close by sharing some details on the next steps in the process. After this series of public comment meetings, there's a Board meeting where Santee Cooper's staff will share comments received with the Board, and customers will also have an opportunity to provide additional comments. That meeting is on August 31st. Then at the

September 29th Board meeting, management will provide a set of final proposed rate revisions to the Board, including any proposed changes resulting from the public comment process.

Following that meeting, the Board is expected to vote on the proposed rates at the October 30th Board meeting. Any new rates approved by the Board of Directors through this process would become effective for services charged on or after February 1st of 2027 and then again February 1st of 2028.

Thank you again for your time today and for your interest in the process.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Greg. Carmen is now going to provide instructions for the public comment process.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you, Tami, and thank you-all for attending today. We look forward to hearing your comments.

We have some instructions for today's meeting. The registration list and sign-in sheet for this meeting will be made a part of the rate adjustment process record. Only those who are registered to speak will be called. If you have not registered to speak and would like to do so, please go to the table outside and register.

The transcript being made by the court reporter will be provided to the Board prior to its consideration and vote on the proposed rate adjustment. The transcript will also be posted on our website within three business days.

Santee Cooper may decline to consider some statements based on appropriate grounds. That includes statements that may be made by non-customers.

Please silence your cell phones. Please be courteous to others who are speaking. Please don't interrupt, clap, or make loud noises during the meeting when customers are speaking, as it will interfere with the court reporter's ability to accurately take down the information that is provided as part of this meeting.

When your name is called, please come to the podium. Speak clearly into the microphone, and state your name, the name of your street but not your house number. We do not ask for your house number for privacy purposes, because the transcript of the meeting is a public document. Please also state the town or county where you receive service from Santee Cooper and confirm you are a customer of Santee Cooper.

In the interest of an orderly and timely process, each person will be limited to three minutes to comment. To help you manage that time, a timer is displayed at the front of the room to indicate when your speaking time has concluded.

We have scheduled three public comment meetings: this one in Berkeley County tonight; one in Georgetown County on July 28th, tomorrow, at 10:30 a.m.; and one in Horry County tomorrow evening at 6 p.m. You may speak at only one of these public comment meetings. If you have already provided comments at any of the meetings, you may not present again at the others. Additionally, you will have another opportunity to provide comments at our Board of Directors meeting on August 31st.

You may also submit questions and requests for information until August 31, 2026. If you have questions about your existing accounts, we have Santee Cooper customer service representatives outside who can help with those questions. We are receiving information today only with respect to the proposed rate adjustment. Our customer service representatives outside can also provide additional information about the rate adjustments related to your individual accounts. Please direct your comments regarding the proposed rate adjustment to us.

For this meeting, the Board members present are here to listen to your comments. They won't be responding to questions at this time. If needed, we will take a break between commenters. If that is needed, we'll announce the time we will reconvene before the break. I'll turn it back over to Tami.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Carmen. Okay. So Mr. Robert Jeffcoat, I believe, would like to make some comments. And, Mr. Jeffcoat, if you could, just a reminder, please provide your name, the name of your street but not your house number, the town or county where you receive service from Santee Cooper, and confirm you're a customer of Santee Cooper. And there's a prompt there on the podium if you need help with that information.

MR. JEFFCOAT: That's even better. Okay. I'm Robert Jeffcoat, Land-O-Pines Circle in Moncks Corner. Moncks Corner is where I get Santee Cooper power from, and I am a customer with Santee Cooper.

I wanted to, one, thank Santee Cooper on this Balanced Demand Billing. When last -- last time we went through this, the demand billing was a big issue for me of being, you know, that one party you throw and you end up with a high demand for that whole month for one day. And it has happened. It happened four times in this past year that I hit that demand right at -- during that peak time when an event is going on at my house. And this will lower my rates.

And I've had extreme lower rates due to the fact that I've been proactive in not being on demand. And of course, the summertime, I'm sorry, I got to have my cold AC. I'll accept that demand of that, but everything else, my hot water heaters, my high-demand items don't get used during that time. And that -- that's the biggest part is I appreciate the Balanced Demand Billing through this. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Jeffcoat. Next we have Mr. Bruce Doyle.

MR. DOYLE: Good afternoon. Bruce Doyle, area of Moncks Corner. A couple questions for you, please. The Peak Demand, will that be going away with the new rate increase?

MR. MCCORMACK: Do you want me to -- the question was will the Peak Demand be going away?

MR. DOYLE: Yes.

MR. MCCORMACK: So the Peak Demand is going to be replaced with the average of your four highest demands. That's the Balanced Demand Billing that we're talking about.
MR. DOYLE: Okay.
MR. MCCORMACK: So no single peak period, but the four averaged --
MR. DOYLE: It'll be overall --
MR. MCCORMACK: Yes, sir.
MR. DOYLE: -- during the period.
So my case -- so I have a 4.7 percent increase. I have outside lighting that has 3.2 percent increase. To me, that's almost 8 percent increase on my bill; is that about right?
MR. MCCORMACK: I -- I think that those numbers wouldn't get added together.
MR. DOYLE: It would not?
MR. MCCORMACK: But certainly we -- we can have a conversation with a customer service representative if you're trying to understand the details.
MR. DOYLE: Yes. I'm trying to understand so I know what to look for. And if it is passed, it goes into effect beginning 2027?
MR. MCCORMACK: Yes, sir.
MR. DOYLE: Okay.

MR. MCCORMACK: February 1st, 2027.
MR. DOYLE: All right. So then how can I find out what it will actually be for me? The actual amount?
MR. MCCORMACK: So on our rate study webpage --
MR. DOYLE: Yes.
MR. MCCORMACK: -- there is a place where you --
MR. DOYLE: I was there.
MR. MCCORMACK: -- can go in and put your -- okay.
MR. DOYLE: Uh-huh. Yeah. And what I'm looking at is that, for me, myself, I'm very conservative and try to manage my use of electricity to maintain my bill at a certain level. But if I'm going to be hit with an 8 percent increase because of outside lighting and my normal use of 4.7 percent, that is a pretty steep increase for me as itself. So I'll ask you to take that advisement and look at our -- people who have those types of situations that they are facing. That's all I'm asking.
MR. MCCORMACK: Okay.
MR. DOYLE: Okay. Thank you.
MR. MCCORMACK: Thank you for your comment.
MS. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Doyle. And I think the last one we have is Mr. Joel Lee.
MR. LEE: Good evening. I am -- sorry. I am from Moncks Corner. My address is Merrimack Boulevard

in Berkeley County. And I'm just wondering, so with this 2027 and 2028 increase, are we going to get another increase for 2029 and -- and 20 -- and 2030? And how much is that going to be for us as residential customers? Because as a residential customer, I can't go to my employer and say, "Hey, by the way, Santee Cooper just threw another 7 or 8 percent onto my bill as a customer. Are you guys going to give me a -- a raise?" They're going to look at me like I'm crazy.

For those that are on fixed incomes, I -- I -- I would say lower this 4.7 and 4.6 for us as customers -- as residential customers, because some of the commercial customers, they go a little longer than we do, as well, in the peak hours as well. And knowing what I know from where I work at, we use quite a bit of light. And we -- we don't shut our lights off at night. So our lights are constantly going as well. Not during the peak time, but off-peak time. But during peak time, we have the lights on.

It's kind of hard for us with all that we keep getting thrown at us as customers. Every time we get a raise, it seems that Santee Cooper and everybody else wants that raise from us. We need a break, too. I just say thank you. And again, my bill is where it should be, but I think it could be lower. I think that we could do a better job with the rate increases for residential customers. The -- the commercial customers should also have a -- a slightly higher increase as well. Thank you.

MR. MCCORMACK: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Mr. Lee. All right. Is there anyone else -- any customers else present that would like to make a comment?

MR. DOYLE: I have one question if you don't mind. Far as the data centers that's in our areas, are we subsidizing them on their bills, or is it a flat rate for them? What I'm looking at is what commercial and industrial units are paying, and they are lower. I understand the use. I understand all of that. But at the same time, are we sharing -- cost sharing with them, or is it just a flat rate for industrial customers?

MS. WILSON: They have their own rate based on their usage. (To Mr. McCormack) Sure. If you want to get to that.

MR. MCCORMACK: Yeah. So our proposed -- we currently have a rate for large loads that helps for them to cover the incremental cost they're causing the system. This rate study has a similar rate. It's called the "High Impact Load Rate." It has similar provisions, and there's some tweaks that we made that we think make it even better and even further protect residential customers from the costs that they may add to the system.

MR. DOYLE: Okay. Thank you.

MR. MCCORMACK: Yes, sir.

MS. WILSON: All right. Well, hearing none others, on behalf of the Board of Directors, we appreciate and value the comments that we received tonight and your interest in the rate adjustment process. We know your time is valuable, and we appreciate that you-all came out tonight.

This meeting is adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 6:26 p.m.)

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
) CERTIFICATE
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

Be it known that Julie Taradash took the foregoing proceeding and hereby attests:

that I was then and there a notary public in and for the State of South Carolina-at-large and that by virtue thereof I was duly authorized to administer an oath;

that the deponent/witness, if any, was first duly sworn to testify to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, concerning the matter in the controversy aforesaid;

that the foregoing transcript represents a true, accurate, and complete transcription of the testimony so given at the time and place aforesaid to the best of my skill and ability;

that I am neither a relative nor an employee of any of the parties hereto, nor of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor interested in the outcome of this action;

that, if a recording of an event was supplied by another party for purposes of transcription and I was not present during that event, the foregoing pages were transcribed to the best of my skill and ability; additionally, any identifications of speakers were provided to me by the party supplying the recording;

that, in the event of a nonappearance by the witness, the foregoing details for the nonappearance are accurate.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto affixed my signature and title.

Julie Taradash

Julie Taradash

Date: 7/30/2026
Notary public for South Carolina
My commission expires March 27, 2035
*Unless otherwise noted, this notary public administered the oath. Please refer to the transcript for any exceptions.
**For details on reading and signing, please refer to the transcript.