SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SERVICE AUTHORITY
SANTEE COOPER

IN RE:	TRANSCRIPT
	OF
PROPOSED RATE ADJUSTMENT	PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

Date: July 28, 2026

Time: 10:31 a.m.

Location: Waccamaw Neck Library Auditorium,

41 St. Paul's Place, Pawleys Island, South Carolina

Reported by
Julie Taradash

APPEARANCES

Santee Cooper Board of Directors Present:
Charles S. Bennett, II, 1st District
Brian C. Frerichs, 5th District
Stephen H. Mudge, Director-at-Large
Alyssa L. Richardson, 6th District
David F. Singleton, Horry County
Tim Tilley, Georgetown 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

Staff Members Present:
Lindsey Whitley,
Corporate Secretary and Associate General Counsel
Emily Tyner,
Manager Corporate Communications
Devin Ritter,
Manager of Pricing
Shawan Gillians,
Senior Director Communications and Community
Greg McCormack,
Senior Director of Financial Planning
Bryan Lewis,
Director Customer Service Retail
Stephanie Burgess,
Senior Manager Retail Services and Customer Experience
Jack Stewart,
Deputy Chief Law Enforcement and Security
Tracy Vreeland,
Public Relations Specialist III
Gleason Deluca,
Customer Experience Analyst III

Staff Members Present (Continued):

Kate Wink,
Government Relations
Kearney Gregory,
Local Government and Economic Development
Brittany Rabon,
Administrative Associate
Byron B. Colvis,
Senior Engineer
Jennifer Dittbenner,
Senior Customer Service Representative
Jaime Linen,
Special Agent III
Mark Trotta,
Special Agent III
Ava Fowler, Summer Student

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: Ladies and gentlemen, good morning, and welcome to Santee Cooper's rate adjustment public comment meeting.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can't hear you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can't hear.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can't hear.

MS. WILSON: Can you hear me now? Is that better? Is that any better?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

MS. WILSON: Okay. Thanks. So this meeting is called to order. For your awareness, this is a public meeting, and a court reporter is present and transcribing the meeting to create a public record.

I'm Tami Wilson, Santee Cooper's Chief Financial Officer, Vice President, and with me is Carmen Thomas, our 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 located here and back there if we should need to get out. 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: For the record, notice of the proposed rate adjustment and this meeting complies with FOIA and a retail sales adjustment process as outlined in the 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.

Now Jimmy Staton, my president and CEO, would like to say a few words.

MR. STATON: Can you-all -- can you hear me okay?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes.

MR. STATON: I would encourage you-all keep the mic close because it is kind of hard to -- to hear out here.

So I want to welcome all of y'all here today. I want to thank you for taking time out of your busy days to spend a little bit of it with us to learn a little bit more about the rate change that we are proposing.

We belong to you. Santee Cooper is owned by you. We're not -- we're not -- we are not owned -- we don't have investors. Our investors are you-all, and we focus on that all of the time. Every decision we make, including, unfortunately, this rate adjustment, is made with the -- with the intent of living up to our commitment to deliver reliable, affordable, and resilient energy to improve the lives of all of our customers.

In just the last three years, Santee Cooper has added over 17,000 retail customers, and that growth, quite honestly, is part of the reason that we're here. But we're also seeing increased electric demand as we continue, as a country and as a state and certainly on Santee Cooper, to electrify more and more all the time. These two factors contributed to six record high demands already this year for Santee Cooper, and we are just barely a little bit more than halfway through the year. So we expect to see more peaks.

And, unfortunately for us, reliable service is not optional. It's a requirement. It's what you-all expect from us, and we've got to continue to ensure that we are doing the right thing to bring that -- that standard of reliability and affordability that you've gotten used to. For that reason -- for that to continue, we've got to continue to proactively invest in our system, and that's what we're doing. We're strategically investing in our generation, in our transmission, and in our distribution systems so that we can keep your lights on tomorrow, as well as today. And we would have liked to have made all of these improvements within the rates that we have today, but unfortunately that math just doesn't -- doesn't work. Customer demand is increasing. Inflation -- inflation is driving up the cost of the equipment that we have to install in order to continue to be able to provide you service.

And so we are doing everything we can to reduce costs. I'll give you a few examples of that. We're locating additional generation on existing generation sites. That avoids us having to buy new property and develop it, and it enables us to take advantage of existing infrastructure so that we don't have to build even more infrastructure to be able to serve you. We're also partnering with other utilities so that we can build bigger together. That enables us to take advantage of economies of scale, and we can pass those economies right back to our customers.

Again, we are owned by the state. We don't recover anything other than just our costs.

We're strategically investing in new technology such as battery storage so that we can charge that off the grid when demand is low, and then we can pull on that when the system peaks. That enables us to reduce the amount of new generation that we need to -- to build.

And on the generation front, we're expanding our natural gas station in Anderson County. We're actually adding a -- we're taking the waste heat from what's already there, putting a new generator in that will enable us to generate more electricity without having to increase the amount of fuel that we -- that we burn. We're also building two smaller units just up the road at Winyah so that we can meet the peak demands and we can balance the use of solar, which is one of the lower-cost sources of electricity.

But even with these mitigation efforts, our costs will exceed our ability to cover them under current rates. But putting these system investments puts our -- not doing this puts our reliability at risk, and we just simply can't do that.

Proactive maintenance is an important tool for us to be able to continue to manage the system. It's a lot like maintaining your car. You change the oil; you put new tires on it. That costs, but it avoids the breakdown later on. We have to do the same thing with our electric grid. So we are -- we're -- we're spending the dollars we need to, to ensure the maintenance so that we don't have unexpected outages for tomorrow. And then just as you sometimes need a larger car as your family continues to grow, we need a broader, larger system because our system continues to -- to grow. And 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. Everywhere you go, everything costs more, and we -- we fully understand that, and we are very focused on continuing to keep your costs down. This proposed adjustment will add less than 25 cents a day to the typical residential bill in 2027 and an additional less than 25 cents a day in 2028. Your bills will still be lower than the other utilities in South Carolina, and, quite frankly, lower than the utilities across the

Southeast.

But we understand affordability means different things to different people, and that's why we continue to work with you on ways you can manage your electric costs. You'll still be able to reduce your monthly bill by adjusting when you use your -- your power, and you'll hear shortly about a few changes we're propose -- we're proposing to that to ensure that -- that you know that your feedback matters to us. We also have a number of rebate and energy management programs that can help you reduce your bills. We have flyers that you can take with you about those programs, and we have customer service representatives here that would be happy to -- to talk to you about any of those.

And, as I said, Santee Cooper, we're only here to benefit you-all to improve the lives of South Carolinians. Thank you again for -- for being here with us, and we look forward to hearing your comments.

Tami, I'll turn it back to you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Jimmy. The agenda for the remainder of today's meeting is as follows: We will make additional introductions, give an overview of the need for the adjustment and the adjustment process, provide an overview of the comment process, and then move into the public comment portion of the meeting.

So here with us today, we have members of the Santee Cooper Board. They're here to listen to your comments. The Members of the Board who are here today are Director Sam Bennett representing the 1st District; Director Brian Frerichs representing the 5th District; Director Steve Mudge, who is our Director-at-Large; Director Alyssa Richardson representing the 6th District; Director David Singleton representing Horry County; Director Tim Tilley representing Georgetown County; and Director Hugh Willcox representing the 7th District. For the record, a quorum of the Board is present.

I'd also like to acknowledge that we have the Office of Regulatory Staff here with us today. From the ORS, we have Donna Rhaney, Stig Rasmussen, Jasmine Gunning, and Shane Hyatt. Thank you-all for attending.

So the purpose of the meeting is to receive input from you, our customers, relating to the proposed rate adjustment. 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, Santee Cooper customer representatives are present outside to assist you.

Regarding the proposed rate adjustments, no deliberations will be conducted today, no votes will be taken, and no decision will be made today.

Before we begin taking public comments, we have a brief overview of the need for the proposed rate adjustment and the adjustment process. I'm going to turn it over to Greg to walk through that.

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

Before I begin, I want to encourage anyone who hasn't done so yet to visit our rate study website. There you can find a variety of rate study materials and our presentation to the Board of Directors on May 1st about the proposed rates. The presentation begins at around the three-hour mark of the Board meeting and can be found by going to

"About" and then "Leadership" from the home page of our website. We also have full schedules, the actual rate study, and management reports available for in-person review at the front customer service table.

Let's start with why rates are increasing. As a state-owned utility, Santee Cooper's rates are based on our actual costs to serve customers compared to the revenues we expect to collect. When our costs are higher than our revenues, we have to adjust our rates. For a public 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 we're making in the system, and a small fee in lieu of taxes. What you don't find in this calculation is profit because that is -- 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, known as the "transmission system." We're also adding new generation to meet the growing needs of our customers. These investments are costly, but they are essential to ensure we can deliver power to our customers when we 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 2024 and 2025, we refinanced debt that generated around $220 million of lower debt costs, with about $7 million per year of those savings occurring in the '27 and '28 rate-study years. We've also worked with large customers to find new opportunities to avoid building generation by having them reduce their usage at our peak, which saves the system about $75 million per year. These savings are passed directly on to our 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, our 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 the different classes reflects that fact. The bottom of the handout explains this concept in more detail.

On the back of the handout explains demand, which is a common rate design concept used to align costs customers cause on the system with the customers responsible for those costs. As shown in 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 based on customer demand. This is intended to align recovery of costs with the customers causing the costs, primarily because a significant portion of the costs we incur during a demand window are not 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 the 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 customers had concern over a single high-use period in a month either causing a surprise bill or eroding the savings they were aiming to achieve during the month. As a result of that feedback, our proposed rates included a -- a change called "Balanced Demand Billing." Instead of billing demand on a single highest hour charge, the new Balanced Billing -- Balanced Demand Billing would include a charge for the average of a customer's maximum hourly use during the four highest peak periods of the month.

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

We also wanted to quickly mention that our proposed rates include a rate related to data centers and other high-impact load customers. One of the concerns that people have -- I'm sorry. Did this turn off?

One of the concerns that people have is data centers coming into a system and driving up costs for residential customers, and we have a proposed rate that charges those customers incremental costs to ensure that our residential and commercial customers do not subsidize the data centers or other high-impact loads coming to the state.

I -- I want to close by sharing some details on the next steps of the process. After this series of public comment meetings is a Board meeting where Santee Cooper staff will share the 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, include (verbatim) 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 on February 1st of 2028.

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

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Greg. I'm now going to turn -- turn it over to Carmen to provide instructions for the public comment process.

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

We have some instructions for today's meeting. Please silence your cell phones if you have not already. Please be courteous to others who are speaking. Please do not interrupt, clap, or make loud noises during the meeting when customers are speaking, as this will interfere with the court reporter's ability to accurately capture the information being provided.

Only those who are registered to speak will be called. If you have not registered and would like to do so, please go to the table out in the hallway and register.

When your name is called to speak, please come up to this podium, speak clearly into the microphone, and state your name, the name of your street but not your house number -- we don't need the house number for privacy purposes because the transcript is a public document -- the town or county where you receive service from Santee Cooper, and confirm you are a customer of Santee Cooper.

To ensure an orderly and timely process, each person will be limited to three minutes to comment. A timer at the front of the room will indicate when your speaking time has concluded.

We have scheduled three public comment meetings: one last night in Berkeley County, one later tonight in Horry County, and this meeting in Georgetown County. The meeting tonight is at 6 p.m. You may speak at only one of these meetings. If you spoke last night or speak this morning, you may not present again this evening. You will also have another opportunity to provide comments at our Board of Directors meeting, as Greg mentioned, on August 31st.

And you may submit questions and requests for information until August 31st, 2026.

We are receiving information today only with respect to the proposed rate adjustments. Our customer service representatives who are outside in the hallway 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 at this table. For this meeting, the Board members present here are here to listen and will not be responding to questions at this time.

Santee Cooper may decline to consider some statements based on appropriate grounds, including comments made by noncustomers.

The registration list and sign-in sheet for this meeting will be included in the rate adjustment process record. The transcript prepared 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.

If needed, we may take short breaks between comments. Should a break be necessary, we will announce the time we will reconvene before pausing.

Tami?

MS. WILSON: Thank you, Carmen. So just as a reminder, when you step up to the podium, for those who are going to be making comments today, please provide your name, the name of your street, but not the house number, the town or county where you receive service from Santee Cooper, and confirm that you are a customer of Santee Cooper.

So the first customer is Mr. Phillip Welch.

MR. WELCH: My name is Phillip Welch. I live on Cutter Cove, Pawleys Island, and I am a residential customer for Santee Cooper.

Before I get started, first of all, I'd like to compliment Santee Cooper on those two changes that were implemented. One being that you reduced the peak period for commercial customers from the four-hour to a three-hour, which makes it more equitable with the other classifications of service. The other one is the fact going to a -- a averaged peak demand period from one point to four points, okay. That can also make a big deal. Somebody makes a mistake, and they don't want to have to suffer for it. So I -- I commend you on that.

My concerns are this: First of all, we're talking about three rate increases in four years, okay? That's -- in my opinion, can only occur -- or may only occur because of one of the following reasons: First of all, you overestimated the additional revenue from the one that was implemented in 2025. Second of all, you underestimated your costs since the 2025 implementation, and the -- the other one is the fact that was mentioned here: There are proposed data centers that are being planned, South Carolina and North Carolina and Virginia that I'm aware of. And I understand that South Carolina legislation has passed some -- some laws that require these data centers to supply the additional revenue that may be required for their costs. However, I honestly don't believe that they will cover all of them. There will be more costs that are going to have to be passed on to other customers in order to pay for the infrastructure and the effect on the power grid, so that's a concern.

The other possibility -- and, again, I have no facts on this, but in the back of my mind, I couldn't help but think that there's a possibility that these rate increases in 2027 and 2028 were actually anticipated and/or planned prior to the 2025 rate increase with the idea being is, "We can't hit everybody at one time with this type of increase, so we'll distribute it over a four-year period, 2025, 2027, and 2028."

Another factor is the majority -- and this was mentioned, too -- of the increase for -- is for residential customers. Unfortunately, residential customers are those that are least able to make adjustments to their income and their expenses. Commercial and industrial have a little more flexibility in doing those things. Particularly with residents that are on fixed income/low income, they are very, very stretched as far as what kind of adjustments they can make. You hear about the stories every day, people in the newspaper or in the news that had to give up on either utilities, rent, mortgage, medicine. Like I said, the --

(To Ms. Wilson) Is that my time up?

MS. THOMAS: Yes, sir. It is.

MR. WELCH: Okay.

MS. THOMAS: If -- if you could conclude and --

MR. WELCH: I apologize.

MS. THOMAS: -- take your seat. Thank you very much. We appreciate your comments.

MR. WELCH: Appreciate it.

MS. WILSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Welch.

Next up is Ms. Susan Walker.

MS. WALKER: I'm very short. Hello. I'm Susan Walker. I live on Fieldgate Circle in Ricefields. I moved here in 1981 to marry a Georgetown boy, and he has passed away. And I live in Ricefields by myself in a house that's probably 2500 square feet. I have your little thermostat that's good. I have new heat pumps. I have double-pane windows, everything. And here's five bills from you since February. And I added up the peak charge from each month, and I have a total of $361.60 above my power bills. Above my power bills. Now, this is ridiculous for us, you know, to live day by day and expect your thing. And the last three months, I don't do any wash between three and nine o'clock or three and seven. I don't do that. So you're saying adjust your -- your HVAC? What am I supposed to do when it's 95 degrees out? I'm supposed to turn that down -- I mean, turn that up? No way. You know, so, you know, you are almost putting a real burden on those that are retired that are living on a budget or whatever. Now, I'm okay, but I don't like my money being spent this way.

And if -- and if this is the problem, why wasn't there more -- why didn't you look sooner at the -- the people moving in here? We've been fighting the -- the amount of people moving in and the development. Did Santee Cooper not expect this? Did they not go ahead and plan for this huge advance in people and the need for power? I -- I don't understand. I -- I mean, I'm listening to you, and I see what you're doing now, but why wasn't this done five years ago, six years ago? Why wasn't it planned better? You know, so I -- I don't have a family of lots of children or anything. I don't know how they are going to afford this. And they're not here today. Your meeting's at 10:30. They're -- you know, they've got kids. Of course, school doesn't start till next week, but if they're all working, they can't be here to tell you.

But I'm -- I'm very upset with this, and I don't -- I guess you're proposing now you're going to take the highest rate and then put it across the board? I -- I don't know. I -- I have to read your material. But that's all I have to say. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you. Next up we have Mr. Tom Pelzer.
MR. PELZER: Good morning. And thank you for having this meeting for us. I guess I sort of just want to rely and go back on the first gentleman where the residential customers you have 4.7, 4.6, and then down the line on the paper that you provided with us. But as a residential customer, I can't make up your price increase. Commercial customer -- just say Quigley's across the street -- they can raise their prices for me, the consumer, to absorb their electric costs. Walmart can raise their prices as a big manufacturer where I'd have to absorb their electric costs. Raising the -- the rates of a lighting customer, that's like a safety issue. Like, there shouldn't be any increase on a streetlight for children to be out playing at night or someone walking through a neighborhood; it's just an unacceptable factor raising a rate for that.
And then as far as billing, like, the rate -- like, it just says on my bill like 8.1 kilowatts or whatever, but I have no way to verify that. It's just you saying that I used 8.1 kilowatts or whatever during a peak period. I can't look at my meter. There's nothing on my meter saying, between

three and six, for a billing period of 30 days, "Oh, okay. I did use 8.1," or is it just 4.2 that I used, but you're saying it's 8.1? And how am I to argue because I have nothing to argue with?

And that's about all. Thank you for your time and being gracious to us.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you. Mr. William Doar?

MR. DOAR: Doar?

MS. WILSON: Yes. Sorry. My apologies.

MR. DOAR: Yeah. Thank you. Thank you very much. My name is William W. Doar, Jr. My wife and I own two properties on Pawleys Island: [redacted] Atlantic Avenue, and I've -- we're at Pawleys Pier Village; I've forgotten the -- the address of that.

For your information, back in the 1980s, I was a member of the South Carolina State Senate. And Senator Dennis and Senator Stephens and I shepherded through the legislation which allows Santee Cooper to provide power in the counties of Berkeley, Georgetown, and Horry Counties. And as far as I know, that's still the law. If that's been amended, I'm unaware of it.

But my main concern is the data centers. I'm opposed to data centers. And I hope that Santee

Cooper will be opposed to data centers coming into either Berkeley, particularly Georgetown, and Horry Counties. I believe that if a data center does come into one of these three counties -- and am I correct that -- that you only operate in three counties?

MS. WILSON: Yeah, we do. But we also serve Central Electric Cooperative, who has customers across the state.

MR. DOAR: Well, your -- but your main operation is -- is within these three counties?

MS. WILSON: Yes. Our direct serve customers, yes.

MR. DOAR: Okay. You're still operating under the same legislation that was passed back in the -- in the 1980s; is that right? Okay. Well, in any event, I believe that, if a data center does come into this area, that they should be required to put up all of the front-end costs that Santee Cooper would have in order to provide power to them.

I am aware, and I believe this is still the law in South Carolina, that Santee Cooper is not regulated by the South Carolina Public Service Commission, that its -- Santee Cooper's Board of Directors has the authority to raise or lower utility rates in Georgetown, Berkeley, and Horry

Counties. And I think that it's almost -- I don't know what the right word is, but they should take this very, very seriously. We have more residents coming into our area. A lot of folks from up North are coming down. I know Georgetown County is seeing great growth. I'm sure that you-all -- I think you alluded to some of the growth that -- that you are having. That ought to take care of some of the costs of which Santee Cooper is having. And I realize that your costs are increasing.

Am I through?

MS. THOMAS: Yes, sir.

MR. DOAR: Okay. Well, thank you very much for your attention, and I -- I wish you the best of luck.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you so much.

MS. WILSON: Okay. Next, Ms. Mary Gale Budzisz?

MS. BUDZISZ: You said that really well. It's a Polish name so . . . I'm Mary Gale Budzisz. I hope you can all hear me, because we're having some hearing problems. This has got to be rectified. This is another meeting that I've come to here that people make statements and I can't hear them.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I agree with you.

MS. BUDZISZ: So you're going to hear me. I live on Fieldgate Circle; I'm a customer in Pawleys Island.

I've been here 29 years, so I'm kind of one of the old customers here.

After learning about your peak proposal, I have honestly tried. These are just the things I've tried in my house. I've got a smart thermostat. I put a timer on my hot water heater. I put in all new duct work in my house. I have a maintenance contract with Carolina Cool, and anytime I have a problem, they're at my door, filters in hand. I post signs on my refrigerator to scare the hell out of anybody that uses anything that's on-peak. They're there for summer peak, winter peak. In my house, we never use a dryer or dishwasher or an oven, take a shower during peak hours. I'm the mean mother. My billing dates are a little different. You tell me April 1st, November, whatever. My billing dates are three to five days prior, so I'm being charged a peak rate. That's something that you haven't told me the whole truth and nothing but the truth, but I figured it out. Over the last 15 months, when you implemented peak hours, I have paid $810.40. Never was there a month in those 15 months that I didn't get a peak charge.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's true.

MS. BUDZISZ: I wasn't home some of the time. Dean Smith in Moncks Corner and I are on a first-name basis. I call Dean every time, say, "What the hell happened again? I wasn't here; you're charging me."

And then I get this little BS talk. "It was too hot outside." "It was too cold outside." "We just had to charge you." Well, excuse me. This truly is inequitable. It's not equitable.

And at no time do I see in your slick thing here -- what is it? Is it still 8 cents versus $8? I don't see any of that written in any of your promotion material. But I'm under the impression that's what I've been paying the last 15 months, so I need to have that as one of my questions that's answered by you. This is not fair.

Data centers, residential, versus industrial customers, we can go on that and have a long discussion, because they can change a little more than I as a consumer. What about giving us a Sunday reprieve so we can have dinner with our family, okay? What about brunch time? It just screws up everything as a household where I've got to plan the food and do this, can't do it. In the times now where it's three to six, I prepare, put the things in the oven. At 6:05 I turn it on and I go to the gym to do my workout.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Exactly.

MS. BUDZISZ: So I do adjust. I try. So some of the questions I just want to leave you with is this cost of the peak rate that I didn't see. Have you raised it? I see in Horry County it's 12 bucks. Are we at 8 bucks? Are we still keeping that rate? Eight cents, $8? That's a huge difference.

Cost to the residential. Let's talk about the fiasco with the nuclear reactors. I've paid for nine years. How many more years do I have to pay for that? I never got a drip of electricity. That was a fiasco. I could've told you about Westinghouse. I could've told you all of that. And I'm a residential -- and your job is to do that, to protect us.

MS. WILSON: Mrs. Budzisz?

MS. BUDZISZ: And I'd like to know more about what are you going to do back there? Time-of-Use rate, I see it listed here, but I don't know about it, and I'd like to know more about it. What's my option? When do I get a choice?

MS. WILSON: Mrs. Budzisz, your time is completed.

MS. BUDZISZ: I bet it is. And where's the plant at

Winyah? I'd like to go visit that.

And thank you for letting me speak, and I want to hear everybody's voice, okay? Thank you very much.

MS. WILSON: Thank you.

MR. MCCORMACK: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. WILSON: Ms. Greta Slali?

MS. SLALI: Hi. How are you? Okay. I am a customer. I live on Lee Circle in Santee Cooper, Horry County. Just a few questions, too. All right. If you're going to do the rate increase, do we still get charged the additional fee -- is it $20 that's right there set up on our bill? I never paid attention to my bill until now when I was sitting there. I actually added up -- you do have a credit for the fuel adjustment and also a credit for demand sales. However, you put deferred cost recovery; you just swapped that right out. So whatever you take off, you put back on. But this one here's 40 cents -- and now I'm going to pay attention. I'm going to go home, and I'm going to read all my monthly bills. This one's 40 cents shy that you guys didn't do the right adjustments on. Okay. That was the first thing.

And then, I, too, got hit from -- with 10 kilowatts one time I wasn't even home. I called up the office. They told me my heat strips went on. I wasn't there, so I don't know. And I know I kept my heat gauge down to 55. So I -- I can't swear, because I wasn't there. So I ate it and swallowed it, and I paid $104 for that one hour.

I don't understand why we, as residentials, have to pay a 4.7 and the commercial 2.9, as they also spoke. They can afford it; we cannot.

Another one is your proposal to change us from going to the -- the demand rates now. You're going to say instead of billing to demand on a single highest, you are now going to take the charge of an average of a customer for the maximum hours. Again, we make our living around the timer for the hot water heater, as well as doing the HVAC. I keep mine also in -- on a timer. I shut it off. My average temperature at my house is from 81 to 83. I don't think I -- I can do any more than that. And it really is a pretty crappy way of -- of living. And I'm really rethinking of staying here in South Carolina. I mean, because this is sort of putting a damper in a lot of our lives, and I can just imagine some of the people that really can't afford it. And I just recently retired, so now I am on a budget. And it's just making everything -- I don't know where else to -- to do it. My maximum air conditioning only goes -- I have a smart thermostat -- 85. I wish I could put it to 90, because at 85, I'm scared that it goes on. So I have to shut it down. In the -- in the winter the heat is minimum 55. Again, I try to do it at 50; it cannot do it. So I have to turn it down. So -- but that's all I have. Thank you.

MS. WILSON: Thank you so much. Ms. Angela Marcone?

MS. MARCONE: Thank you. Hi. I'm Angela. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I live on Red Rose Boulevard in Pawleys, and I am a customer. So a lot of things are going through my mind when I'm listening to everyone else. And I tend to be the kind of person that, when I see an issue, I try to brainstorm for ideas to help for the solution instead of complaining But I do have a couple of questions.

Demand charge, how is the bill lowered by reducing your demand at peak hours? I'm just wondering how -- what you mean by that.

And Balanced Demand Billing, is this same as setting up a rate for the entire year, and then, at the end of the year we're balanced out? Is that what that is? Just want to ask that question.

Couple of things that I looked up when looking at the documents online and some numbers: average cost -- US cost of power in 2024, you had listed it as 164.80 per month, when the average cost was 144 to 148. And then South Carolina, you listed as 149 to 156. So it looked as if the graph -- which I am accustomed to doing when I used to work for IBM is that you can make a graph look any way you want to justify your means of expression. So that was just a couple of things I wanted to point out.

Also, I see that Santee makes about $22 billion annually. And towards the new grid, $5.7 to $6 billion is designated to -- towards that. Now I could be wrong. Upgrade is $300 million, and you have bonds of $685 million that are granted at a low interest rate. So those are just some questions.

And then, just me, because of who I am, I have brainstorming ideas that might help as opposed to, you know, just complaining. And my questions are: I believe that you have the ability to perform database searches on all your customers, because you have all their detailed information. So I was just wondering, did you or could you perform those searches? In other words, spend a little more detail looking at your customers as opposed to putting some sort of blanket charge across the -- across the hall. So, for example, if you did a database search of the top usage households, that would allow you, then, to target them first. And then, if you did the same for a particular subset community -- again, you could look at the abusers. And then you can target those abusers first before applying the charges to everyone in the community.

And then you also probably have the ability to determine household size and average monthly kilowatts used. So you could do a database query for one-year data, and then you could compare that to the state average and compare that to the national average. If a household uses less -- excuse me -- not national, but United States -- uses less than that and the state average, then you could remove the peak hour parameter from those people. I'm done?

MS. THOMAS: Yes, ma'am.

MS. MARCONE: Okay. I have the -- my sheet, just to give more information, and I'm hoping that you'll take a look at it and maybe do some of those

queries.
MS. THOMAS: Thank you very much.
MR. MCCORMACK: Thank you.
MS. WILSON: Thank you. All right. Is there anyone else who indicated a desire to provide comments this morning and has not done so?
MS. MARCONE: Can I do more? Because I have some really good ideas.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yes, you do.
MS. WILSON: Okay. Hearing none, on behalf of the Board of Directors, we appreciate and value the comments we've received and your interest in the rate adjustment process. We know your time is valuable -- valuable, and we appreciate you coming to talk to us this morning.
This meeting is adjourned.
(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at 11:15 a.m.)
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) CERTIFICATE
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

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

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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;

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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
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