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Santee Cooper Retail Rates Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder Meeting #1 – Public Meeting Summary

Date: September 29, 2025

Time: 2:02 – 3:52 pm EDT

Location: Virtual Meeting via Zoom, Vanry Associates hosting

Topic: Santee Cooper Retail Rates Stakeholder Engagement

In support of Santee Cooper's ongoing commitment to engage stakeholders, the meeting was the first of a series of meetings to provide customers and other stakeholders with an opportunity to learn more about the rate review process overall and offer feedback.

The following referenced attachments are posted as separate documents on the Santee Cooper Rates Stakeholder Meetings webpage, in support of further stakeholder education and engagement.

1. Meeting 1 Presentation
2. Recording of Meeting
3. Question and Answer (Q&A) Log

In this summary:

- Registration and Attendee Overview
- Agenda, Presenters, and Topics
- Q&A Summary
- Post-Meeting Feedback Survey Summary
- Action Items
- Appendix A - List of External Attendees
- Appendix B - Post-Meeting Feedback Survey Results

Registration and Attendee Overview

Santee Cooper used various means to announce the meeting to customers and stakeholders. These included electronic advertisements and social media posts. In these announcements, stakeholders were directed to the Rate Stakeholder Meetings webpage, where they would find a link to register for the stakeholder meeting.

Upon registering, registrants received a confirmation email with options and instructions on how to join the meeting. Registrants also received two reminder emails: one week and one day before the session.

Additionally, Santee Cooper team members contacted known stakeholders directly, alerting them to the meeting and how they could register.

In summary

- 247 registrations were received up to the start of the meeting on September 29, 2025

- 91 individuals, or 37% of those registered, attended all or a portion of the meeting
- All but 7 attendees represented external stakeholders
- 20 of the external stakeholders either self-identified as representing an organization, or were identified as being affiliated with an organization based on their email

Appendix A includes a list of meeting attendees. The list excludes Santee Cooper employees.

Agenda, Presenters, and Topics

AGENDA

Welcome	**Stewart Ramsay, Meeting Facilitator, Vanry Associates** Stewart Ramsay welcomed participants, explained the meeting format, and encouraged engagement. He noted that all questions and answers (Q&A) would be visible to attendees and shared publicly with the meeting summary and recording. He emphasized that registration emails would be used solely for rates related communications. Stewart outlined the agenda, introduced speakers, and highlighted the goal of keeping the discussion clear and jargon-free. He thanked those who submitted questions in advance, most of which would be addressed during the session; others were forwarded to the appropriate Santee Cooper departments.
Introduction to Santee Cooper	**Mike Smith, Director, Billing and Pricing, Santee Cooper** Mike Smith introduced Santee Cooper as a state-owned, not-for-profit utility dedicated to serving South Carolina. As one of the largest public power utilities in the United States, the organization provides reliable energy and drinking water to approximately two million South Carolinians through wholesale power and direct service. Governed by a 14-member board of directors appointed by the governor, Santee Cooper operates as a business without equity shareholders, focusing on improving the quality of life for residents. The utility serves 19 electric cooperatives, several municipalities, 27 large industrial entities, and 188,000 residential customers. With a consistent top 10% ranking for residential reliability and high customer satisfaction rates, Santee Cooper has also earned recognition for safety and community involvement, volunteering over 27,000 hours annually with nonprofit organizations. Mike emphasized the company's core mission of providing essential services efficiently and affordably while maintaining a statewide focus on economic development and customer service.

Santee Cooper Electric Rates

Mike Smith, Director, Billing and Pricing, Santee Cooper

The focus of the session was to provide an overview of Santee Cooper's electric rates, including providing context, outlining the design process and discussing rate structure impacts. The session focused primarily on residential rates.

RETAIL ELECTRIC RATE FOUNDATIONS

Mike explained that electric retail rates are a system of charges designed to recover the projected costs of providing electric service to customers. These rates are forward-looking, based on a cost of service approach, and differ across customer types due to their unique electricity needs. Santee Cooper follows specific pricing principles adopted in 2020 and codified in 2024, which include limiting price increases to less than inflation, allocating costs equitably among customer classes, and ensuring sufficient revenue to preserve the utility's financial integrity.

RETAIL ELECTRIC RATE DESIGN PROCESS

He went on to outline Santee Cooper's rate design process; one that aims to structure pricing in a way that encourages conservation, shares savings with customers, and provides reasonable relief mechanisms for financially distressed customers. Transparency is a key principle, with an annual review of compliance submitted to the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS). The rate-setting process is complex, typically taking 18 months from start to finish, and involves careful consideration of revenue requirements, cost functionalization, classification, and allocation. Santee Cooper's approach emphasizes fairness, efficiency, and customer engagement, with a commitment to keeping rates as low as possible while maintaining a reliable and safe electrical system.

CURRENT ELECTRIC RATE STRUCTURE IMPACTS

Mike discussed the new residential general service rate, which introduced a demand charge based on the single highest energy usage hour during peak periods (3:00-6:00 PM in summer, 6:00-9:00 AM in winter). The intent is that customers can reduce their bill by managing their peak hour energy consumption, even if their total monthly energy use remains the same. For a typical 1000 kWh customer with a 5.1 kW peak demand, they could potentially save $5 on their bill by reducing peak demand by just 0.8 kW. To help customers understand and adapt to this new rate structure, Santee Cooper implemented extensive customer education efforts, including bill comparisons, direct assistance from customer service agents, and a low-cost advertising campaign. The rate design aims to encourage energy conservation and help customers save money by shifting high-energy appliance use outside of peak hours. The utility recognizes the challenges some customers face with this new rate structure and has offered alternatives like the time-of-use rate. Santee Cooper is committed to evaluating the rate's effectiveness and is open to feedback, including establishing a technical working group to continue discussions about rate design and cost allocation.

Meeting Closeout

Stewart Ramsay, Meeting Facilitator, Vanry Associates

Stewart wrapped up the meeting by thanking people for their time and questions and by encouraging participants to fill out a survey to inform future meetings; the survey would pop up in their browser as participants left the session. He noted the meeting summary and recording would be posted to the Rate Stakeholder Meetings webpage. Mike also thanked participants for spending their time and appreciated the chance to speak with customers directly.

Q&A Summary

During this meeting, stakeholders were able to ask questions in two ways:

1. Using the Zoom **Q&A** tool, they could type and send a question at any time during the session and receive a written or verbal response from one of the Santee Cooper Pricing team members during the meeting.
2. Using the **Raised Hand** functionality during the open-floor question period at the end of the session.

For questions asked using the **Q&A** tool, any follow-up comments, questions, and answers were reflected in a thread connected to the original question. Some of the Q&A questions were answered live by the presenter.

Overall, 42 interactions were initiated via typed questions (written asked/answered or written, asked live/answered) and five with stakeholders using the raised hand functionality.

A transcript of the Q&A log is available on the Rate Stakeholder Meetings webpage, along with other September 29th Stakeholder Meeting #1 documents.

Post-Meeting Survey Summary

Attendees were invited to provide feedback upon leaving the Zoom meeting. The short survey included five questions. Of the five, two questions allowed participants to provide written feedback. Vanry Associates received 34 responses to the post-meeting survey, representing about 37% of attending stakeholders. The overall survey response was positive. In summary:

- 80% of those who responded rated themselves as feeling better, to fully informed
- 53% of respondents found the detail in the presentations just right, 38% found it too technical, and 9% found it a little too basic
- 97% indicated they were satisfied with their ability to contribute
- 59% of those who responded to the survey provided written feedback

The results of the post-meeting survey are included in Appendix B.

Action Items

Next Steps and commitments from the meeting were to:

- Ensure Santee Cooper Customer Care follows up with attendees who had individual account-based questions that could not be fully answered during the meeting
- Review the stakeholder feedback from the meeting Q&A log, post-meeting survey, and any emails received pre- and post-meeting
- Host the first technical working group session in early November 2025

APPENDIX A

List of External Attendees

Attendees are represented in alphabetical order by the name provided. The list excludes Santee Cooper employees.

ATTENDEE	ORGANIZATION
Alvin Rubelmann	
Audie Bremer	Matheson Tri-Gas Inc.
Brian Gerello	
Brian Swart	
Buddy Styers	Myrtle Beach Air Force Base Redevelopment Authority
Carol Cannon	Cannon Fine Arts, Inc.
Carol Mirone-Braden	
Cathy Misenhiemer	
Christina Stanfill	
Christine Murphy	
Clarence Ridenhour	
Claudette Vaught	
Dan Lucis	
Debra Hodges	
Dennis Boyd	
Dennis Wajda	
Doug & Suzanne	
Ed Barch	
Edward Christovich	
Elijah Lowe	
Elizabeth Neuhaus	
Forrest Smith	
Frank Knapp	SC Small Business Chamber of Commerce
Frederick Bang	
Fredrick Grizmala	
Gerald Antonacci	
Holly Tempel	
Jackie McMillian	
Jacqueline Pennie	
Jake Duncan	Vote Solar
Jason Rapp	Rappid Energy
Jeffry Pollock	J. Pollock, Inc.
Jimmy Gray	Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce
Joan Williams	South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs
John Malko	
Jordan Watkins	

Joseph Doria	
Karen White	
Kathy Shock	
Kay Nicholson	
Kirk Wilson	
Laurie Mullis	
Lilibeth Hanlon	Bridge Strategies LLC
Lisa Hyatt	
Lisa Phillips	
Maria Morais	
Maureen K Gross	
Michael Leonard	
Michael Peters	Messer
Mike Lavanga	Nucor
Orby Ferguson	
Patti Clark	
Peter Eisenberg	
Phillip Davis	
Rich Weimer	
Rick Smith	Today's Harvest Church
Robert Bernard	
Robert Luria	
Robert Orlowski	
Rositsa Yordanova	Sachdeva management
Ryan McKelvey	Airgas
Scott Luster	
Shane Hyatt	South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff
Sharon Hendershot	
Sharon Wilcox	
Shelia Newcomb	
Stanley Levy	
Stanley Solak	
Stephen Peart	
Steve Biese	
Steven Janes	
Susanna Martin	
Terri Cronan	
Thomas German	
Twila Becker	

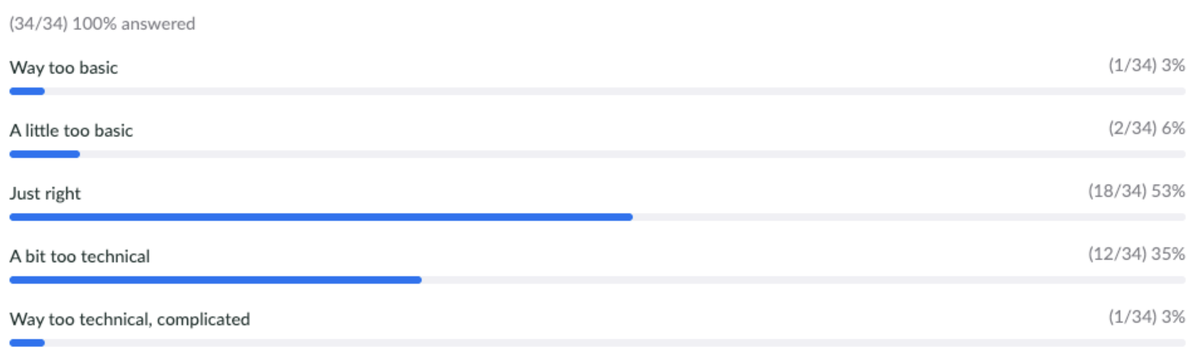
APPENDIX B

Post-Meeting Feedback Survey

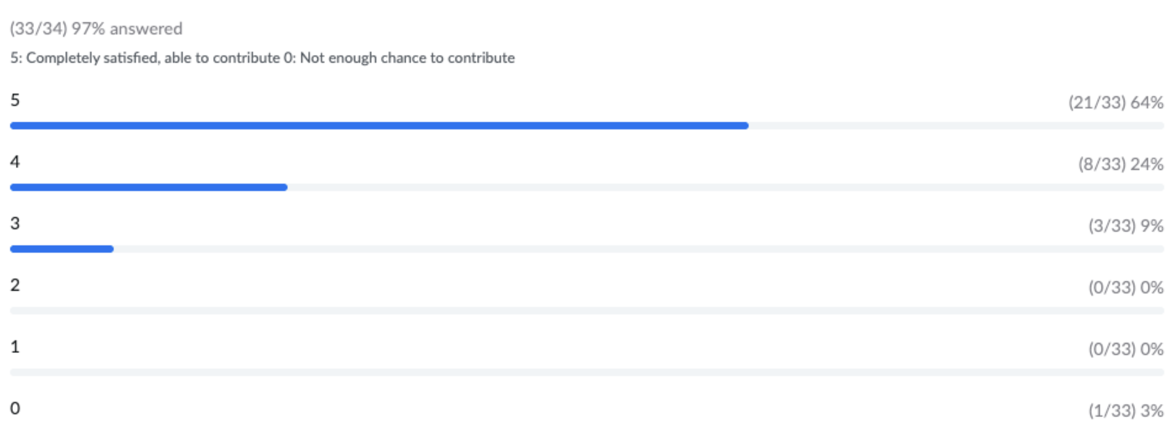
Note: the stakeholder comments in questions four and five are included verbatim as received. The graphs are representations generated by the Zoom platform.

1. Based on today's session, how informed are you about Santee Cooper's current rate review efforts?

2. How would you rate today's presentations on the level of detail?



3. How would you rate your ability to provide input to the meeting?



4. Is there anything you would like to see less or more of?
   - More transparency, for people not in the industry.
   - I don't think Mr. smith had an adequate answer on the issue of basing peak charges off 1 hour vs tracking usage and charging for that (per Mr. Leonard's question). I suggest an easier to understand explanation of why the 1 hour is used..
   - It might be helpful to explain to the viewers how to ask questions verbally. I resisted "raising my hand" because I was not sure if I had a functioning microphone, and I did not want to interrupt the discussions if I was not able to communicate. Also, I heard a number of folks say something about "unmute". Was that something they did in their operating system, or was that something that pops-up when they hit the button to raise their hand? So in general, maybe a quick tutorial at the start.
   - I'd like to see real-life examples. By demonstrating a few different real bill scenarios with explanations and/or how things were calculated. Including a comparison of all 3 options (i.e. budget billing, GS and RT-25), showing which option would be best suited for that particular home. Homeowner info hidden of course, as it's not about the person, it's about the billing process.
   - why was there no discussion on commercial rates? i sat through 2 hours waiting and none were presented.
   - side by side examples of how a customers' bill would be calculated using both the "demand rate" and the "time of usage rate".
   - Try to limit meetings to 1 hour or an hour and 15 minutes.
   - Provide a copy of the presentation in advance of the actual presentation. It would make it easier to follow.
   - The delivery was confusing to many in the session. Approach the topics from with plain language that most people can understand. The demand rate explanation was murky and vague. I understand why after listening and reviewing the slides, the demand rate is more or less a not so hidden surcharge. Call it what it is and people will appreciate the transparency! Perhaps hire a communications consultant to help with the messaging and content of these sessions.
   - No
   - How the 3 hour peak time frame was determined and justified.
   - Excellent job disseminating the info. You all showed great care & empathy for your customers and fielded some difficult questions with poise. As a home energy auditor, I would love for you all to talk more about building science and energy efficiency, but at this time folks are still grappling with the program basics. I noticed a couple you tube videos on your channel. Maybe considering making more of those. Educational videos told from a testimonial perspective with a little storytelling.
   - Less peak hour charges! What a scam to pay off the debt from the failed nuclear facility.
   - Simplify
   - 10% off bill for attending seminars

5. Is there anything you would like to say about your experience of the overall rates review process? Are there questions we didn't address?

- Good presentation. As the first time this was done, I'm sure it will get better in the future. Thank you.
- I appreciate the well-spoken speakers presenting today. I would imagine Mike was caught off-guard a bit. Always a possibility with live meetings. All of my questions were answered. Thank you again for the opportunity to attend and ask questions. Now if we could only get the HOAs to act as gracious, maybe better things could happen. 😁
- no commercial rate discussion.
- Just wondering if my input will have any measurable effect.
- I am still confused how the demand rate is calculated. When Mike spoke about it during the meeting it sounded like the demand rate would be charged for only one hour. I will have to call a service advisor to see if I can get a better explanation and also how my bill would be affected if a switch to time of usage rate. As one person commented, everyones circumstances are different.
- I did have the opportunity to express my question and concern about "PEAK" charges. I reiterate, I think they are a mistake and taking advantage of people who have all-electric homes.
- No.
- No
- I really enjoyed it and learned a lot.
- Folks seemed most confused about the differences between the demand plan and the time of use plan. And confusion about how budget billing is connected. Maybe more visuals or showing some real examples for a few different customers. I would love to join the working group with the November meeting so I'll keep an eye out for sign ups. Great job and thank you for this webinar.
- I was surprised to learn that there is a "Residential Time-of-Use Rate Schedule." In all the customer communications that I received during the transition to the new peak hours scheme, I don't believe there was ever any indication that customers had a choice in how their bills would be calculated. This "option" was news to me.
- Well done
- I don't like increasing usage of ac before and after peak hours.
  Is part of the increase due to paying for the failed nuclear project?
  Is there concern about keeping up with the unregulated growth in the area, ie peak consumption?
  peak hours.
- No
- Very informative and professionally done.
- This was a good presentation of the information. The initial information on the new peak rates was not as clear as today's presentation. Specifically, how the Peak Charge was to be calculated and if the highest rate applied to every day of the month. Thanks for clearing things up.