

## For Immediate Release

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### **Press Advisory: Groups Protest Piedmont Natural Gas Rate Hike Request to the NC Utilities Commission**

**Charlotte, NC** – Piedmont Natural Gas, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Duke Energy, is requesting a rate hike from the North Carolina Utilities Commission which will impact customers with increased prices and will fund the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure in the region - at a time when Duke ought to be aggressively moving towards renewable energy.

Protesters from environmental and social justice groups and citizens will assemble outside the Mecklenburg County Courthouse (832 E 4<sup>th</sup> St, Charlotte, NC 28202) on Wednesday, July 10 before joining a scheduled NC Utilities Commission public hearing (being convened in Courtroom 5350 at 7:00 pm). The outside activities will include a picket line, props, banners, theater, a rally, and a press conference. These will bring attention to and highlight community opposition to the request and to the continued support for the development of fossil fuel infrastructures such as gas pipelines and LNG facilities.

- What:** Rally and Press Conference against proposed Piedmont Natural Gas rate hike request.
- When:** Wednesday, July 10, 2019; Picketing begins at about 5:00 pm, Rally at about 5:45 pm, and Press Conference at about 6:00 pm
- Where:** Mecklenburg County Courthouse (832 E 4th Street, Charlotte, NC 28202)
- Who:** Protesters from 350 Charlotte, Friends of the Earth, 198 Methods, and others

Speakers invited to the Press Conference include: Former Mayor Jennifer Roberts, Rev. Corine Mack, Rev. Leo Woodberry, and Rabbi Judith Schindler.

**Background:** From the NCUC's announcement of the hearing: "On April 1, 2019, Piedmont Natural Gas Company, Inc. (Piedmont), filed a request to increase its rates for natural gas service. Piedmont seeks to increase its annual revenues by \$83 million or about 9%. Under Piedmont's proposal, a typical residential customer using 91 therms of gas in the winter would see a monthly bill increase from about \$110 to about \$122. For a typical residential customer using 18 therms of gas in the summer, the monthly bill would increase from about \$29 to about \$31."

Much of the rate hike request will go to support the expansion of new facilities and upgrade of current ones. Expansion of natural gas facilities is not aligned with the Paris Agreement climate goals, nor with Governor Cooper's EO80. Rate payers should not be asked to carry the cost of facilities that are not in line with their best interests.