



**June 2023**

Dear New River Light and Power Customer,

For nearly 110 years, Appalachian State University's New River Light and Power (NRLP) has provided electricity to our community. As the NRLP general manager, I am proud of our utility's long history of **reliable service**, of our status as being among the **lowest cost providers of electricity in the state**, and most recently, of our commitment to **providing renewable energy options** for our customers.

This letter shares some important information about the future of NRLP and ways we are working to continue this important legacy. I hope you will take the time to read it below and to reach out with any questions you may have.

**NRLP has applied to the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) requesting an increase in our electric service rates. Even with the proposed rate increase, NRLP will continue to be among the lowest cost electric utility providers in the state.**

- Each year the NCUC allows NRLP to adjust rates up or down to reflect any increase or decrease in wholesale power rates.
- These wholesale power adjustments do not cover the costs of capital improvements, such as grid modernization, power station replacements, and other enhancements to increase efficiencies in current and future operations; nor do they cover increases in operating expenses, such as materials, labor and equipment, which we have held as low as possible since our last rate increase request in 2017.
- NRLP provides safe and reliable electricity — averaging just 15 minutes per year of outage time compared to 140 minutes for all electric utilities nationwide. With a reliability rating of 99.99%, NRLP continues to be among the most customer-focused utilities in the nation, providing as much electricity as our customers need, when you need it the most.
- In order to keep our power infrastructure modernized and maintain the high level of service to which our customers have become accustomed, we must increase rates. This is why we submitted our application to the NC Utilities Commission. This process is called a General Rate Case.

**Public hearings for this rate increase are required by state law.**

- In recent weeks, you have received notice that NRLP filed an application with the North Carolina Utilities Commission requesting authority to adjust and increase its rates and charges for retail electric service for its service area in Watauga County. You can [view this application](#) on the NRLP website, which you can access at [NRLP.appstate.edu](http://NRLP.appstate.edu). Per state law, on May 23, the NC Utilities Commission held the first of two [public hearings](#). At the May hearing, held at the Watauga County Courthouse, the public was invited to testify and file statements. On July 10, expert witnesses will share their testimonies at a hearing in Raleigh, which will also be livestreamed for greater access to the public.



### **Our mission to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity remains foremost.**

- NRLP remains mindful of today’s challenges and tomorrow’s opportunities. Our investments in the future are carefully considered, always with our customers’ needs in mind, and our efforts are nationally recognized. The American Public Power Association named NRLP a Smart Energy Provider for our work in carrying forward the university’s key sustainability initiatives. Already this year, the same association recognized us with a national award for Excellence in Reliability and a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3©) designation.

### **Current renewable energy options include:**

- Last year, thanks to NRLP’s wholesale purchase power agreement with Carolina Power Partners, NRLP began offering large-scale options for our customers to implement an easy, affordable solution to offset their carbon usage. In response to customer demand, NRLP developed its Green Power Program, which began by offering an option to purchase clean, regional hydroelectric power.
- Additionally, NRLP compensates customers who generate their own electricity through a “buy-all/sell-all” arrangement. Through this method, which is commonly used to compensate customers, customers purchase all of their energy from the utility, and all energy generated by customers is purchased by NRLP. This NCUC approved rate is designed to ensure NRLP’s fixed costs are recovered and not subsidized by non-participating customers, which is required by state law.
- Under the current rate case, there is a proposed increase in compensation above the current buy-all/sell-all rate.

### **Proposed renewable energy options included in our NC Utilities Commission application:**

- As part of NRLP’s proposed General Rate Case to the NC Utilities Commission, we are requesting permission to add a new, net billing option for customers who produce their own energy. Through the proposed net billing model, customers will be able to use their own generated energy, rather than selling it to NRLP, and for any excess power generated, they will be compensated at full retail rates. Customers will be charged a separate fee, based on their solar facility, to ensure we are compliant with state law, which requires that NRLP fixed costs are recovered and not subsidized by non-participating customers.
- If approved by the NCUC, the net billing option would be included as another choice for NRLP customers. The currently available options to purchase hydroelectric power, and the buy-all/sell-all method of compensation for self-generated power will remain available, as they were previously approved by the NC Utilities Commission.

### **Determination of programs and offerings:**

- Every program that has an impact on customer costs must first be approved by the NCUC and comply with state statutes. As a local utility, our dedication to cost-effectiveness means we are selective in what programs we offer. We strategically implement customer requested initiatives like the Green Power Program, prepaid billing, and energy audits while continually evaluating ways to incorporate additional programs that benefit all customers.



**We're proud to be a sustainability partner with the Town of Boone.**

- Because public power is a community effort, NRLP teamed up with the Town of Boone to support its own growing renewable footprint. Through NRLP's Green Power Program, the Town of Boone has met its 100% carbon-neutrality goal.
- We have also offered our support of the town's efforts to seek funding for renewable energy projects. In addition, NRLP is aggressively pursuing federal and state grants to address future needs and meet the goal for NRLP to lead the region's public power companies with innovative, renewable solutions.

**Here's where you can learn more:**

We are here to answer specific questions and would love to hear more about how we can better serve you.

- Visit our website at [nrlp.appstate.edu](http://nrlp.appstate.edu)
- Call us at 828-264-3671.
- Scan this QR code with your mobile phone to read NRLP's application to the North Carolina Utilities Commission:



- Scan this QR code with your mobile phone to learn more about the North Carolina Utilities Commission's public hearings regarding NRLP's General Rate Case application



Thank you for the opportunity to serve you, and please don't hesitate to reach out for more information.

Sincerely,

Ed Miller  
General Manager  
Appalachian State's New River Light and Power