

The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy Action Fund (SACE Action Fund) is a non-partisan, non-profit (501c4) organization working to ensure clean energy solutions are a top priority for our region's elected leaders. SACE Action Fund engages in public education, legislative action, and electoral accountability here in the Southeast. You can find out more about our work at cleanenergyactionfund.org.

As we prepare to consider endorsements for the Georgia Public Service Commission and undertake voter education activities, we would like to understand your positions on the following questions:

Question 1: If you are elected/re-elected, what policy outcomes would you prioritize?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

The first policy outcome I would prioritize is a rate case review, if not a formal rate case docket, to evaluate the justness of current electricity rates. The \$2.89 decrease in bills that was promised in the emergency 2023 IRP Update was ignored in the 2025 IRP. Typically a rate case would follow an IRP. In this case, a rate freeze was put into place instead of a rate case docket, locking in 6 rate hikes in 2 years. The average family is now paying \$600 more per year for electricity. Seniors are struggling to their bills with only a \$35 senior discount and no assistance from LIHEAP. Large data centers are paying a small fraction of the rates that residential customers pay, without sufficient railguards in place to protect against cost shifting from data centers to residential customers. And the return on equity authorized for the monopoly electric utility is far above the market rate among competitive electric utilities, which deserves examination and adjustment.

The second policy outcome is to re-examine the 2025 IRP, using the modeling tools and licenses available to PSC staff and that I have trained on as well, with a critical review of the power plan that was selected and its costs and benefits compared to a clean energy portfolio with demand side management and a fair value given to solar. I feel it is important to not wait for the next 2028 IRP to prepare such analysis, and the 2025 IRP was flawed and led to the approval of thousands of megawatts of new gas-fired capacity to be built.

Question 2: What opportunities do you see for the PSC to better balance financial risk between customers and utilities?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

The risk is very unbalanced and heavily favors the electric utility. First, each year Georgia Power purchases \$2 billion in coal and methane gas, sending those dollars out-of-state. That fuel cost is 100% passed-through to the customer with 0% risk worn by the utility. When fuel prices spike, so do power bills. Second, customers carry the risk of mismanaged projects, cost overruns, and poor investment decisions, as we

saw with Vogtle units 3&4 and now with the buildout of fossil gas-fired power plants to meet data center demand. The electric utility not has little-to-zero financial risk, they are rewarded with an authorized return on equity that is well above the market average.

Question 3: What do you believe the role of solar energy should be in Georgia, and what solar policies would you like to see enacted?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

Solar energy is key to lowering the cost to generate electricity in Georgia. We should significantly increase the megawatts of solar on the system, including medium-sized installations like community solar and warehouse rooftop solar. Another promise from the 2019 IRP was to run a pilot of 5,000 residential rooftop solar customers with monthly net metering at full value, evaluate the impact, then expand the pilot. The utility and the PSC never returned to that pilot, and customers with rooftop solar on instantaneous net metering now only receive one-third of the value of the solar they sell back to the grid. I would look for more ways to ensure we are adding as much responsible solar to the grid as quickly as possible.

Question 4: Should electric utilities be required to pursue all cost effective energy efficiency opportunities?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

Yes, all cost effective energy efficient programs and policies should be implemented. Rate impact measure tests and other criteria used to evaluate the net benefits and costs can be difficult to ascertain. But generally speaking energy efficiency is the lowest hanging fruit and the least costly way to meet our energy needs.

5. What benefits do you believe electrifying transportation will deliver to Georgians?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

ICE vehicles waste two-thirds of the energy as heat out the tailpipe and are a major source of climate changing emissions and health-damaging pollution. Electric vehicles are 3x as efficient as ICE vehicles, and new models can provide backup power for days to a household. Electrifying transportation will clean the air and lower costs for Georgians. As a PSC Commissioner, I will look for ways to promote rapid electrification of transportation in Georgia.

6. Do you think changes in utility regulation practices are needed to respond to the current surge in data center construction?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

Yes, I believe there is a significant cost shift taking place, which shifts the short-term energy generation costs as well as the long-term infrastructure buildout costs of data centers coming to this state onto the backs of residential customers and families struggling to pay their power bill. A large data center pays 80% less than a residential customer pays for the same electricity. Current PSC rules give the discretion to Georgia Power to decide if data centers are paying their fair share of the cost of their electricity use.

Question 7: What role should the PSC play in advancing decarbonization as a risk mitigation strategy for customers and government?

Peter Hubbard's Answer:

The PSC should be the tip of the spear in advancing decarbonization for customers and government. Electricity generation is a key sector where we must decarbonize, which will bring economic benefits, public health benefits, and a reduction in harmful climate changing emissions. The PSC can lead the way with forward-thinking power plans and innovative rate structures. The PSC can promote the deployment of commercially successful programs like virtual power plants and bring your own battery programs where distributed energy resources are given their fair and full value. The PSC can work with partners like SACE to bring forward policies and proposals to help customers and local/state governments alike to mitigate their risk of increasing power bills and damaging weather events exacerbated by climate change.