

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE IRP



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The Integrated Resource Plan is finally here! As a refresher, the Public Service Commission (PSC) consists of 5 state-wide elected officials. This group regulates several of the state's key utility industries, including electricity.

Every three years Georgia Power brings forward (files) a comprehensive strategy for the future of their electric utility operations to the PSC. This is called the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). When Georgia Power files the IRP, this kicks off a process which includes multiple hearings before the PSC.

Georgia Power, the PSC staff and outside invested groups who participate as 'intervenors' all bring forward expert witnesses to testify. At the end of this process, stipulations to the plan are negotiated between Georgia Power, the PSC and intervenors. Finally, the PSC votes on whether to approve the IRP. For more background about the PSC, check out last month's article [here](#)!

Athens-Clarke County will be intervening in the 2025 IRP process as a member of the Coalition of Local Governments. The Coalition of Local Governments includes several other local Georgia governing bodies: Atlanta, the City of Decatur and Gwinnett County. Collectively, these governments are intervening in the 2025 IRP.

ISSUES PROMOTED BY

THE COALITION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

FOR THE 2025 IRP

EXPANDING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY

It is a goal of Athens-Clarke County to reduce the community's energy burden placing emphasis on low income and vulnerable populations.

INCREASED ACCESS TO RENEWABLE ENERGY & OPPOSING THE EXPANSION OF POLLUTING FOSSIL FUEL RESOURCES

Promoting cost effective procurement and access to clean and renewable energy will support Athens-Clarke County's efforts to meet the goals set out in the 2019 Clean and Renewable Energy Resolution. The Coalition of Local Governments opposes the expansion of fossil fuel resources including coal, oil and natural gas-particularly as a de facto answer to data and AI processing center energy demands.

ESTABLISHING DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCE PROGRAMS & DEPLOYMENT-READY CLEAN ENERGY SOLUTIONS FOR A CLIMATE RESILIENT GRID

The transmission of energy is costly, and in the face of a changing climate, Georgia will face more extreme weather events threatening outages. Small scale energy production and storage like rooftop solar and batteries can play a major role in reducing transmission needs and increasing grid resiliency by distributing energy assets closer to where energy is being consumed. Establishing programs to mitigate power outages, like promoting local microgrids will be key to meeting the challenges due to the evolving state of our climate.



EXPANDING COMMUNITY SOLAR

Community solar is legally defined in Georgia as a solar array up to 6 mega-watts on 30 acres or less of land which provides saving to nearby bill payers who are subscribed to that program. Many organizations and individuals are interested in clean energy but cannot install solar on their homes or business because they are renting or because of physical rooftop or shade limitations. Community solar allows individuals to support clean energy and benefit from the resulting cost saving without having to install solar on their home or office.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND DEMAND-SIDE MANAGEMENT (DSM) PROGRAMS

Demand-side management refers to adapting energy needs to meet production (vs adapting production to meet energy needs). DSM can involve energy efficiency investments which reduce energy needs and shifting when energy is used. Generally speaking, it is cheaper to invest in energy efficiency on the demand side rather than investing in increased energy production.

ADEQUATE & TRANSPARENT DATA ACCESS

Reliable energy data access is essential for local governments to effectively manage their

energy use while accurately tracking both local emissions reduction goals as well as federal grant reporting requirements. Energy data informs far reaching decisions including facility upgrades, energy efficiency projects and renewable energy investments.

The Mayor and Commission endorsed the goals set forth by the Coalition of Local Governments as well as Athens-Clarke County's participation in the IRP as a member of the Coalition in January 2025. The agenda item for this endorsement can be found [here](#).