SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER

Ten 10th Street NW, Suite 1050
Atlanta, GA 30309

Telephone 404-521-9900
Facsimile 404-521-9909

October 9, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Ms. Sallie Tanner
Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Re: Direct Testimony of Maurice Carter of Behalf of Sustainable Newton; Docket No. 57243

Dear Ms. Tanner:

Please find enclosed an electronic version of the following **Direct Testimony of Maurice Carter on Behalf of Sustainable Newton** and its corresponding exhibits to be filed in Docket No. 57243.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Whitfield
Senior Attorney
Southern Environmental Law Center
10 10th Street, Suite 1050
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
404-521-9900
jwhitfield@selc.org

Counsel for Petitioners

BEFORE THE GEORGIA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA

Sustainable Newton, Sara and Randall ("Randy") Vinson, and Theodosia and William ("Billy") Wade, Petitioners, v. VoltaGrid, LLC, Respondent	Docket No. 57243

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF MAURICE CARTER
ON BEHALF OF
SUSTAINABLE NEWTON

October 9th, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Q: PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS.

A: My name is Lamar Maurice Carter Jr., and I go by Maurice Carter. I am a resident of Newton County. My address is 3117 Floyd St., Covington, GA, 30014.

Q: MR. CARTER, PLEASE BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR BIOGRAPHICAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND.

A: I was born in Atlanta and lived in Dekalb County growing up. With a two-year exception, I have lived in Georgia. I graduated from Georgia State University in 1981 and received a degree in journalism. I have lived in Covington with my wife in our current home since 2004. Professionally, I worked 34 years in various roles within information technology. I worked the last 19 years of my career at IBM until my retirement in 2015.

Q: WHO ARE YOU PROVIDING DIRECT TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF? WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

A: I am providing direct testimony on behalf of myself and Sustainable Newton. Sustainable Newton's address is P.O. Box 146, Oxford, GA, 30054. I am a co-founder and the current president of Sustainable Newton.

SUSTAINABLE NEWTON

Q: PLEASE DESCRIBE SUSTAINABLE NEWTON'S BACKGROUND AND WHY IT WAS CREATED.

A: Sustainable Newton is a grassroots, community-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in Newton County, Georgia that I and eight others co-founded in 2018. Prior to its creation, my community and I had regularly been discussing shared concerns about

environmental threats affecting Newton County. We discussed issues including climate change, sustainability, waste, clean energy, transportation, and various environmental hazards. In response to these concerns, we co-founded Sustainable Newton in 2018 with a strong focus on local solutions, rather than just talking about problems. Sustainable Newton's vision is that "we're building a world where People and Planet are as important as Profit and future generations matter."

In 2019, Sustainable Newton elected its first board members and officers, and I was elected to three consecutive one-year terms as president. After rolling off the board in 2022, due to term limits in our bylaws, I returned to the board in 2025 and was re-elected president, which is a role I continue to hold.

Q: PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW SUSTAINABLE NEWTON OPERATES AS AN ORGANIZATION.

A: Sustainable Newton is a membership-based organization comprised of dues-paying members. The organization is run entirely by volunteers. There are approximately 40-50 annual, dues-paying members. Sustainable Newton also regularly communicates by e-mail with a few hundred individuals to raise awareness of the issues in their community.

Sustainable Newton has six board members. As a board, we meet six times a year, with all members welcome at every meeting. Both board and non-board members collaborate on various committees to advocate for and implement local environmental solutions through partnerships with residents, businesses, and government officials.

Sustainable Newton's work happens largely in committees, which are the places where priorities of the organization are identified, and next steps for transforming concerns into positive action are developed. Currently, we have four working committees: (1) Clean Energy & Efficiency, (2) Waste Reduction & Diversion, (3) Clean Transportation, and (4) Environmental Hazards.

Q: PLEASE PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF EACH OF THE FOUR COMMITTEES.

First, the Clean Energy & Efficiency Committee helps Newton County households, businesses, and local governments work towards cleaner, more affordable energy by expanding access to solar power, supporting home and building electrification, and maximizing energy-efficiency opportunities. Sustainable Newton offers advice, coaching, and resources to help residents and organizations take advantage of federal, state, and private-sector incentives that reduce the cost of solar, electrification, and energy-saving upgrades. Sustainable Newton is a champion of solar energy as a cleaner, more affordable alternative to fossil fuels and an effective way to relieve the energy cost burden faced by many households in our community. For example, during our Solarize Newton-Morgan program, we signed up 16 households and installed 85 kW of solar capacity. In addition, through this committee, Sustainable Newton partners with Groundswell on their SOUL City of Covington & South Fulton County, Georgia program in order to assist low-income households in the City of Covington apply for and receive Home Energy Rebates administered by the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA). Corporate donations will be used to fill any cost gaps so that upgrades are zero-cost for homeowners. The program focuses on insulation, weatherization, and high-efficiency electric heat pumps to continue working towards energy efficiency.

Second, the Waste Reduction & Diversion Committee focuses on promoting a zero-waste mindset and reducing the amount of solid waste reaching the county landfill through educational campaigns and community and municipal partnerships. Sustainable Newton is a proponent of a circular economy where products and materials are kept in circulation so that they never become waste and nature is regenerated. In line with these goals, this committee applied for and received a grant from Amazon to purchase and distribute compost tumblers in the community.

Third, the Clean Transportation Committee works towards reducing climate and air pollution in Newton County by accelerating the transition to cleaner transportation alternatives, encouraging more trips by lower-carbon options, and advocating for more public transportation. This committee has collaborated with local governments to apply for state and federal grants to install EV chargers and purchase electric school buses. We also advocate for improvements to community infrastructure for active transportation mode like walking, biking, and e-mobility.

Finally, the Environmental Hazards Committee aims to achieve a safe and sustainable environment for residents and workers in Newton County. This committee was formed in response to public reporting showing elevated cancer risks in our community from the ethylene oxide leaking from a local commercial sterilizer facility. We monitor reporting from government agencies, nonprofit environmental and public health organizations, and the media to detect and notify residents when conditions could threaten public health. The committee responded in a similar fashion to a 2024 chemical fire at the BioLab facility in

Conyers. The committee advocates for laws, protections, and oversight to protect the community.

Q: PLEASE SUMMARIZE SUSTAINABLE NEWTON'S HARMS FROM VOLTAGRID'S PLANNED OPERATIONS.

A: Sustainable Newton has several concerns about VoltaGrid. First, VoltaGrid is planning to operate a significant power plant in our community without any oversight from the Public Service Commission or elected officials in the City of Covington, which means that we do not have a publicly accountable body to whom we can raise our concerns, other than by bringing this Petition. Second, Sustainable Newton is very concerned about the harm VoltaGrid's powerplant will have on our members and on our natural environment. Third, VoltaGrid is following different rules for energy providers that we understood applied in Georgia, and if VoltaGrid's behavior is illegal, it should be stopped and forced to follow the rules.

Q: YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU ARE HARMED BY NOT HAVING A PUBLICLY ACCOUNTABLE BODY TO WHOM YOU COULD ADDRESS CONCERNS. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS HARM FURTHER?

A: Yes. Typically when a utility proposes a project of this scale, we would inform our members and followers across our broader communications channels about the potential impacts so that they could engage both on their own and collectively through Sustainable Newton. If there was any opportunity to get involved publicly, Sustainable Newton would have engaged to ensure the interests and needs of our community are heard and accounted for in the regulatory process.

In the past, Sustainable Newton has engaged in regular and ongoing conversations with officials at the cities of Covington and Oxford to influence policies, practices, and investments for their electric utilities. We've encouraged them to eliminate policy and pricing barriers to residential, solar, and industrial solar adoption. We have also persuaded them to invest more resources in wholesale renewable energy. With regards to electric membership corporations (EMCs) in Newton County, we share information with our members and followers concerning clean energy rebates and community solar programs, as well as equip our members to advocate for clean energy with their provider.

When looking at VoltaGrid's arrangement with Serverfarm, if Georgia Power was building the power plant to provide electricity, we would be coming to the PSC to express our concerns – because Georgia Power is regulated by the PSC under Georgia law. But now we face the concerns discussed above as a result of the actions of a different energy company – one seeking to operate like an electric utility, while carving out a gray area they argue is outside the purview of the PSC.

Whether by a city council, a board, or the Public Service Commission, every electric utility operating in Georgia today is governed by an elected board accountable to the communities in which they operate. The health and wellbeing of our Covington and Newton County community depends upon those same principles being applied to the operation VoltaGrid seeks to deploy.

Q: YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE HARM VOLTAGRID WILL HAVE ON YOUR MEMBERS AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT. COULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS FURTHER?

A: Yes. Sustainable Newton and its members are concerned about a number of impacts. VoltaGrid is a power plant that is planning to operate in the midst of our community. Our members drive by its prominent site regularly, will breathe the pollution it emits, will hear the noise it will create, and are impacted by the localized and broader environmental impacts it will have. VoltaGrid's plan for 24/7 operations will result in 24/7 noise, light, heat, and air pollution. VoltaGrid's location is on an industrial block, but it is also in close proximity to wildlife sanctuaries, neighborhoods, one of our primary rivers, and the Newton County reservoir and water treatment plant. Hazelbrand Road, where VoltaGrid is being built, connects multiple large residential neighborhoods in east Newton County to downtown Covington. As a result, the community is not only concerned about VoltaGrid's impact on the natural environment and its obtrusive presence in the neighborhood, but the community is also worried about how its light and noise pollution may have downstream impacts on the wildlife and natural resources surrounding VoltaGrid.

As for our concerns about air pollution, Sustainable Newton joined the Southern Environmental Law Center in submitting comments to the Environmental Protection Division on the sufficiency of the air permit protections in place from air pollution. Sustainable Newton wrote the Environmental Protection Division separately to express our community's deep concern about the cumulative impacts of the numerous industrial

facilities in Covington and the resulting threat of VoltaGrid's pollution to our health and environment. A true and correct copy of Sustainable Newton's March 13, 2026 letter to EPD is attached as Exhibit MC-1. A true and correct copy of the air permit comments drafted by Southern Environmental Law Center, and joined by Sustainable Newton, are attached as Exhibits MC-2 and MC-3.

In sum, Sustainable Newton has concerns about the health impacts of the increased pollution in our community that results from VoltaGrid's operations, particularly in light of the fact that VoltaGrid will release a carcinogenic pollutant, formaldehyde, into a community that already has elevated cancer levels, when compared to the rest of the state. (*See* Ex. MC-1 at ¶ 4).

As of September 18th, 2026, I am aware that the Environmental Protection Division has issued a final permit to VoltaGrid to begin operating. A true and correct copy of the permit is available on EPD's website and is attached here as Exhibit MC-4. Though the final permit has more protections in place for our community than were initially requested by VoltaGrid, the permit continues to allow VoltaGrid to emit substantial quantities of air pollution that will contribute to a community that is already overburdened by industrial pollution.

Q: HOW DOES VOLTAGRID'S CONSTRUCTION AND FUTURE OPERATIONS AFFECT SUSTAINABLE NEWTON'S GOAL TO PROMOTE CLEAN ENERGY IN THE CITY OF COVINGTON?

A: As stated previously, Sustainable Newton and its members strongly value using and promoting clean energy both in our community and for the sources of energy that we use. The City of Covington has agreed to VoltaGrid constructing and operating new gas infrastructure that will lock our community into more fossil fuels. Instead of building clean energy in our community, we will have fossil fuels in close proximity to where our members work and live. This stands in clear opposition to our goal of promoting clean energy, such as more solar energy, in the City of Covington. Even if VoltaGrid provides energy to Serverfarm for a short period of time, there will be significant expansion of gas infrastructure built by the City of Covington – regardless of whether or not it will be used after this arrangement.

Q: YOU MENTIONED HARM FROM VOLTAGRID FOLLOWING DIFFERENT ENERGY RULES THAN OTHER ENERGY PROVIDERS. CAN YOU EXPLAIN THIS HARM FURTHER?

A: Yes. We were surprised to learn of VoltaGrid's proposed arrangements with its customer, Serverfarm, because we believed Georgia's energy laws prohibited those kinds of arrangements. Widespread perception about what is and is not permissible under Georgia's energy laws has limited the kind of projects that we have been able to help develop during our advocacy. VoltaGrid's seeming failure to follow the same rules runs contrary to our missions to promote clean energy and to ensure that our community is protected from pollution and other hazards.

Q: HOW HAVE GEORGIA'S ENERGY LAWS IMPACTED SUSTAINABLE NEWTON'S SOLAR DEVELOPMENT?

A: In August 2022, Sustainable Newton submitted a Letter of Interest to develop a grant proposal for the Ray C. Anderson Foundation under the Drawdown Georgia Climate Solutions & Equity Grant program that would bring solar to low-income communities within the City of Covington. We wanted to select the Fowler Court apartments for this project, but we learned from the City of Covington that our proposed single solar project could not deliver energy to individually metered apartments. To serve the Fowler Court apartments, we explored options with the Covington Housing Authority to convert the community to a single meter such that the grant could be used to build a solar microgrid to serve all the apartments. However, we were informed that Georgia's energy laws did not allow a third, non-utility party to provide energy in that way, and we would not be able to retain control or operate the solar panels for the different metered apartments. Ultimately, Sustainable Newton was not invited by the funders to submit a full application because of the barriers to apply the proceeds to the Fowler Court apartments, due to Georgia's energy laws.

A similar situation occurred when Meta granted Sustainable Newton $50,500 to install rooftop solar for a local non-profit. During our 2023 search for a suitable non-profit recipient, Sustainable Newton sought to have the funds go towards a community nonprofit that would install a rooftop solar project to serve disadvantaged portions of the community. We again faced similar challenges with Georgia energy laws that would not allow us to build and operate a community solar microgrid without utility company

involvement. So, as a result, we were limited in our options. We ultimately used the grant to fund a 21 kW rooftop solar system for McIntosh Trail Early Childhood Development Council. However, we would have preferred to have more options to leverage the funds into a larger, more impactful result.

VoltaGrid is attempting to operate behind the meter in a way that proliferates harmful fossil fuels in our community and in a way that we believe violates the law. If VoltaGrid's operations are unlawful, we want them to be enforced. If VoltaGrid's operations are ultimately determined to be lawful, Sustainable Newton would greatly benefit from clarity in the law so that its own efforts to support clean energy projects are not as constrained in the future.

Q: ARE YOU A LAWYER OR LEGAL SPECIALIST THAT FOCUSES ON ENERGY LAWS?

A: No, I am an advocate and concerned citizen who has developed an understanding of Georgia energy laws over time through my community involvement and volunteer activities.

Q: HOW DID YOU BECOME FAMILIAR WITH GEORGIA'S ENERGY LAWS?

A: I became familiar with Georgia's energy laws by working with various stakeholders who are well-versed in the subject matter, from private clean energy developers to government officials. By working with these various stakeholders, I personally learned about the common beliefs of how the laws constrain the work Sustainable Newton wanted to do – specifically about the limitations of what is or is not possible. I also learned about

Georgia's energy laws when my wife ran for mayor, and I helped her prioritize environmental and electric rate issues that were intertwined with energy laws.

DOCUMENT AUTHENTICATION AND ATTESTATION

Q: DO YOU ATTEST THAT THE ASSERTIONS IN PETITIONERS' COMPLAINT, PARAGRAPHS 2-3 ARE TRUE AND COMPLETE TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

A: Yes, they are.

Q: SINCE LEARNING OF VOLTAGRID AND/OR IN PREPARATION FOR SUBMITTING THIS TESTIMONY, HAVE YOU REVIEWED PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS ABOUT VOLTAGRID AND ITS OPERATIONS, WHICH YOU HAVE ATTACHED HERETO?

A: Yes.

Q: WHICH DOCUMENTS HAVE YOU REVIEWED AND ATTACHED?

A: In addition to Exhibits MC-1 through MC-4 discussed above that I have reviewed and attached, there are a number of other relevant documents and online sources. In the course of engaging in the VoltaGrid matter and/or in preparation for this testimony, I have reviewed the following sources online and these are the true and correct copies of the information which are attached as exhibits below.

VoltaGrid maintains a website: voltagrid.com. One section of the website is labeled "Data Centers." Within that section, VoltaGrid has a subsection entitled "Temporary Bridge Power" and "Long-Term Bridge Power."

I have attached a true and correct copy of VoltaGrid's Data Center – Temporary Bridge Power website page, available at https://voltagrid.com/data-centers/temporary-bridge-power. (Ex. MC-5).

I have attached a true and correct copy of VoltaGrid's Data Center – Long-Term Bridge Power website page, available at https://voltagrid.com/data-centers/long-term-bridge-power. (Ex. MC-6).

On the Long-Term Bridge Power page, VoltaGrid has posted a video. I have attached a true and correct copy of that video. (Ex. MC-7).

VoltaGrid has another section of the website labeled "Technology." Within that section, VoltaGrid has a subsection entitled "Remote Operations Center." I have attached a true and correct copy of VoltaGrid's Remote Operations Center website page, available at https://voltagrid.com/remote-operations-center. (Ex. MC-8). On the same page, VoltaGrid has posted a video. I have attached a true and correct copy of that video. (Ex. MC-9). I have also attached a true and correct copy of the video's transcript. (Ex. MC-10).

Additionally, the City of Covington publicizes public hearings of its City Council on its website, including a City of Covington Council meeting on December 16, 2024. I have attached a true and correct copy of the December 16, 2024 City of Covington's council meeting, available at https://tinyurl.com/2bfs79b4. (Ex. MC-11; *see* Pet. at ¶ 11).

Finally, Oilfield 360 posted a video on YouTube titled "#83. Building a Billion-Dollar Energy Company: Nathan Ough's Story" on January 20, 2026. I have attached a true and correct copy of that video, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3jNRNEqBTU. (Ex. MC-12). In that video, there are a few key statements: (1) VoltaGrid is "America's largest portable utility, power company" (*id.* at 17:29), (2) VoltaGrid has "around 1500 employees," is "growing fast," and is "on track, pre-any acquisitions, to hit 2,000 [employees] by Christmas this year" (*id.* at 15:17), and (3) VoltaGrid is "spending about a quarter of a billion dollars every thirty days . . . in capital" (*id.* at 18:23).

Q: DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR TESTIMONY?

A: Yes, it does.

VERIFICATION

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF NEWTON

Personally appeared before the undersigned officer, duly authorized to administer oaths in the State and County aforesaid, **Maurice Carter**, who, after being duly sworn, deposes and says that the facts contained in the foregoing Direct Testimony are true and correct to the best of his information and belief.

This 8th day of October, 2026.

Maurice Carter

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this 8th day of October, 2026.

Notary Public

SHERRI ANN FERGUSON NOTARY PUBLIC NEWTON COUNTY, GEORGIA MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 04/18/2030

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this day, I have e-filed with the Commission the foregoing Direct Testimony of Maurice Carter on Behalf of Sustainable Newton and its corresponding exhibits served by email to the following:

Sallie Tanner
Executive Secretary
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
stanner@psc.ga.gov

Chris Collado
Hearing Officer
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
ccollado@psc.ga.gov

Justin Pawluk
Staff Attorney
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
jpawluk@psc.ga.gov

Tom Bond
Director of Utilities
Rob Trokey
Director, Electric Unit
Georgia Public Service Commission
244 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
tbond@psc.ga.gov
rtrokey@psc.ga.gov

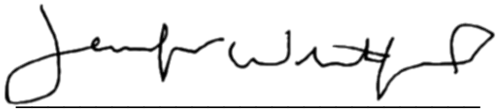
Newton Galloway
Galloway & Lyndall, LLP
The Lewis-Mills House
406 North Hill Street
Griffin, Georgia 30223
ngalloway@gallyn-law.com
Counsel for VoltaGrid, LLC

David E. Penland
One Griffin Center
100 S. Hill Street, Suite 600
Griffin, Georgia 30223
dpenland@beckowen.com
Counsel for VoltaGrid, LLC

Steven J. Hewitson
Brandon F. Marzo
Michael G. Foo
Troutman Pepper Locke LLP
Bank of America Plaza
600 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 3000
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
steven.hewitson@troutman.com
brandon.marzo@troutman.com
michael.foo@troutman.com *Counsel for Georgia Power Company*

James A. Orr
Lee A. Peifer
Bejamin E. Reed
Eversheds Southerland, LLP
600 Peachtree Street NE, Suite 5200
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
jamesorr@eversheds-sutherland.com
leepeifer@eversheds-sutherland.com
benreed@eversheds-sutherland.com
Counsel for Georgia EMC

This 9th day of October, 2026.



Jennifer Whitfield
Georgia Bar No. 984465
Bob Sherrier
Georgia Bar No. 979890
Southern Environmental Law Center
10 10th Street, Suite 1050
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
404-521-9900
jwhitfield@selc.org
bsherrier@selc.org

Counsel for Petitioners