

Florida Public Service Commission

consumer E-Newsletter

December 6, 2005

CHAIRMAN



**BRAULIO
BAEZ**

Peak Shifting

The time of day when electricity is used can make a big difference to Florida, and ultimately, to you. By practicing “peak shifting” – shifting the time of day you use such household appliances as your washing machine, vacuum or dishwasher – you can help reduce electricity demand during the peak times of the day, thereby reducing the overall cost of power in Florida.

To learn more about how to practice peak shifting and how it affects your electric bill, read Chairman Baez’ Consumer Bulletin:

[Peak Shifting](#)

Introducing Commissioner Isilio Arriaga



Isilio Arriaga was sworn in on November 1, 2005, to serve a partial term on the Florida Public Service Commission. His term will end on January 1, 2007. Commissioner Arriaga fills the vacancy left by the resignation of former Commissioner Charles Davidson.

Commissioner Arriaga was most recently an Independent Management Consultant for Ferrell Schultz Consulting, Inc. He served on the Board of Directors of the Venezuelan-American Chamber of Commerce as well as the Council of the Bi-National Chambers of America (CBCA), and is a trustee member and former president of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. Arriaga served as a Congressman in the Republic of Venezuela from 1988 until 1993, where he co-sponsored the first Privatization Law in the nation. As an International Consultant, Arriaga was a strong advocate of the promotion of U.S. enterprises in Latin America.

His career in Venezuela began in the oil fields as a Junior Engineer for Shell Oil Co. He went on to create the Planning Office and Long Term Industrial Loans Department for Banco Union, where he served as General Manager for Investments. Following his public service, and while residing in Texas, he formed an international consulting firm and worked with U.S. entities promoting new business development as a strong advocate for U.S. enterprises in Latin America. He served as a consultant in Miami, responsible for the reengineering process of a corporation which pioneered digital functions for ATM networks.

Commissioner Arriaga, 57, received a Master’s degree in Industrial Engineering from New York University and holds a Bachelor’s degree from Pratt Institute (NY).

What Does The Public Service Commission Do?

The Florida Public Service Commission oversees telephone service in Florida and also sets the rates utility companies may charge for natural gas and electricity. The PSC sets the price we pay for water in 36 Florida counties.

Need Discounted Phone Service?



Learn More About
Lifeline Assistance
& Link-Up Florida

Utility Problems?

File An Online Complaint

**Problem
Solved**

**Have
Questions?** 

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Commissioner Edgar Appointed to Federal-State Joint Board



Florida Public Service Commissioner Lisa Polack Edgar has been appointed to serve on the [Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service](#) by the [Federal Communications Commission \(FCC\)](#).

"I appreciate this opportunity to be a voice for Florida's consumers," Commissioner Edgar said. "Florida is one of the fastest growing states in the nation and we're a donor state to the [Universal Service Fund](#), which brings with it a special perspective."

The Joint Board was established in 1996 to make recommendations on the implementation of the Universal Service provisions of the federal Telecommunications Act. The board membership includes FCC members, state utility commissioners and a consumer advocate.

"Florida is a state that epitomizes diversity. We are largely urban, but we also have rural needs," Commissioner Edgar said. "We have a broad demographic base that includes substantial Hispanic and elderly populations, and we have counties with high per capita income levels and counties with low per capita income levels."

Commissioner Edgar said her experience in dealing with a broad array of constituencies in Florida will assist the joint board with issues including the price for serving high-cost rural areas and the equitable distribution of funds among states.

Special Services and Telephone Equipment for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind and Speech Impaired Florida Citizens

[Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.](#) (FTRI) is a statewide not-for-profit organization that administers the Specialized Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program for citizens of Florida who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deaf/Blind and Speech Impaired.

The Florida Legislature passed the [Telecommunications Access System Act \(TASA\)](#) in 1991, (F.S. 427). One purpose of TASA is to provide access terminals required for basic telecommunications services for hearing impaired, speech impaired and dual sensory impaired persons, in the most cost effective way.

The specialized telephone equipment and ring signaling devices provided through this program are loaned to all qualified permanent residents of Florida for as long as they need it, **at no charge**.

FTRI CUSTOMER SERVICE

FTRI is committed to making sure all clients receive excellent service. If you have a concern or comment about any service you receive from FTRI or any of its affiliations, please call the central office at 1-800-222-3448 (Voice) or 1-888-447-5620 (TTY), Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Eastern time.

www.ftri.org

You can write to FTRI at:

**Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.
1820 East Park Avenue
Suite 101
Tallahassee, FL 32301**

Medically Essential Electric Service

Do you know someone who has a medical condition that requires electrically-powered equipment that must be continually operated to sustain life or avoid serious medical complications? What would happen to that person if he could not pay his electric bill? Would his service be disconnected?

The electric utilities regulated by the Florida Public Service Commission (Florida Power & Light Co., Florida Public Utilities Company, Progress Energy Florida, Inc., Tampa Electric Co., and Gulf Power Company) all have identical [tariffs](#) that define how the companies will address the needs of a customer who uses "continuously operating electric-powered medical equipment necessary to sustain the life of or avoid serious medical complications requiring immediate hospitalization of the customer or another permanent resident at the service address" and has not paid his electric bill.

Here is what you need to know about the protections afforded by the Medically Essential Electric Service provisions:

- The need for medically essential service must be certified by a doctor of medicine certified to practice in Florida.
- The company is required to grant an extension of not more than 30 days beyond the date service would normally be disconnected for nonpayment.
- The company must give written notice of the date that the service is liable for disconnection based upon the 30-day extension.
- The customer is then responsible for making the payment or making other arrangements to meet his medical needs.

- No later than noon on the day prior to the disconnection date, the company must attempt to contact the customer by telephone to advise them of the impending disconnection.
- If the company cannot reach an adult member of the household by telephone, it must send a representative to the residence no later than 4 PM on the day before the scheduled disconnection to advise the customer of the impending disconnection.
- If no one is home, the representative may leave written notification of the disconnection.
- This plan cannot ensure that the customer will have electric service 100% of the time. Natural disasters, equipment failures, or other unforeseen events may cause a service interruption.
- The customer is responsible for any backup equipment and/or power supply in case of an outage.