

Ms. Carlotta Stauffer
Commission Clerk
Public Service Commission
Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850

February 8, 2016

Dear Ms. Stauffer,

This testimony is being made by Michael R. Brower, a Gulf Power customer, receiving Gulf Power service at 5073 Mandavilla Blvd., Gulf Breeze, FL 32563.

Gulf Power filed a petition with the Public Service Commission (PSC) in October for a \$106.8 million increase in base rates. Gulf Power also seeks to increase the "fixed" charge portion of their monthly bill, which is the amount that I pay regardless of whether or not I use any electricity. That fixed charge would go from the present \$18.00 per month to \$48.06 per month.

Presently, Gulf Power already has the highest fixed charge of any major utility in Florida and they are requesting to increase the fixed rate by \$30.06. Gulf Power wants to increase its profit (Return on Equity) from 10.5% to 11%. The present national average ROE for the utility sector is around 9%. Finally, Gulf Power recently invested \$2.2 millions of rate payer originated dollars in a deceptive lobbying campaign advancing Florida Solar Energy Subsidies and Personal Solar Use Initiative on the November 8, 2016, ballot in Florida as an initiated constitutional amendment. This wasted effort was rejected at the polls and thus only benefited the lobbyists.

As a senior citizen, retired naval officer living on a fixed income I find a 10% rate increase and a 37.5% fixed charge increase to be an obscene and avaricious request. My Gulf Power monthly bill, after my mortgage, is the single largest present component of my budget. If Florida PSC Docket Number 160186 is approved, my ability as a responsible, independent citizen; who is not a burden on society, will be financially degraded and compromised.

You see my fixed income has not ever seen a cost-of-living a adjustment anything close to the magnitude of the base rate/fixed rate increase Gulf Power seeks. For example my fixed income in 2016 received 0.0% COLA and will rise only 0.3% in 2017. Historically,

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SS and DOD COLA has averaged 1.36% since 2010. This year, even with a .03% COLA Social Security actually went down because the Federal Withholding Tax went up and MEDICARE Part B increased 5%. My mortgage has increased because of the increased Santa Rosa property taxation burden. My fuel costs are increasing and are now up 3%.

I most strongly urge Florida PSC to deny Gulf Power's Florida PSC Docket Number 160186 request. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Brower

Michael R. Brower
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