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BEFORE THE  
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20210015-EI

Petition for rate increase  
by Florida Power & Light  
Company.

\_\_\_\_\_ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS  
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN GARY F. CLARK  
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM  
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY  
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA  
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Wednesday, June 30, 2021

TIME: Commenced: 7:00 p.m.  
Concluded: 7:56 p.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center  
Room 148  
4075 Esplanade Way  
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY  
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING  
112 W. 5TH AVENUE  
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA  
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 WADE LITCHFIELD, JOHN BURNETT, MARIA MONCADA  
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4 Boulevard, Juno Beach, Florida 33408; KENNETH A.  
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6 Florida 32301; RUSSELL A. BADDERS, ESQUIRE, Gulf Power  
7 Company, One Energy Place, Bin 100, Pensacola, Florida,  
8 32520, appearing on behalf of Florida Power & Light  
9 Company (FPL).

10 BRADLEY MARSHALL and JORDAN LUEBKEMANN,  
11 ESQUIRES, Earthjustice, 111 S. Martin Luther King Jr.  
12 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; CHRISTINA I.  
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14 Boulevard, Suite 201, Miami, Florida 33137, appearing on  
15 behalf of Florida Rising, Inc., League of United Latin  
16 American Citizens of Florida, and Environmental  
17 Confederation of Southwest Florida.

18 THOMAS JERNIGAN, MAJOR HOLLY BUCHANAN, CAPTAIN  
19 ROBERT FRIEDMAN, SERGEANT ARNOLD BRAXTON, EBONY PAYTON  
20 and SCOTT KIRK, Federal Executive Agencies, 139 Barnes  
21 Drive, Suite 1, Tyndall AFB, Florida 32403, appearing on  
22 behalf of the Federal Executive Agencies.

23

24

25

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 JON C. MOYLE, JR. and KAREN A. PUTNAL,  
3 ESQUIRES, Moyle Law Firm, 118 North Gadsden Street,  
4 Tallahassee, FL 32301, appearing on behalf of Florida  
5 Industrial Users Group (FIPUG).

6 JAMES W. BREW and LAURA W. BAKER, Stone Law  
7 Firm, 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street NW, Suite 800 West  
8 Washington, DC 20007, appearing on behalf of Florida  
9 Retail Federation (FRF).

10 WILLIAM C. GARNER, ESQUIRE, Law Office of  
11 William C. Garner, 3425 Bannerman Road Unit 105, #414,  
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32312, appearing on behalf of The  
13 Cleo Institute Inc.

14 GEORGE CAVROS, ESQUIRE, 120 E. Oakland Park  
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17 Energy (SACE).

18 KATIE CHILES OTTENWELLER, ESQUIRE, 838 Barton  
19 Woods Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30307, appearing on behalf  
20 of Vote Solar.

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25

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; CHARLES  
3 REHWINKEL, DEPUTY PUBLIC COUNSEL; PATRICIA A.  
4 CHRISTENSEN and ANASTACIA PIRRELLO, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF  
5 PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West  
6 Madison Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida  
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8 State of Florida (OPC).

9 SUZANNE BROWNLESS, BIANCA LHERISSON, SHAW  
10 STILLER and JENNIFER CRAWFORD, ESQUIRES, FPSC General  
11 Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,  
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of  
13 the Florida Public Service Commission (Staff).

14 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE  
15 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service  
16 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,  
17 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public  
18 Service Commission.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Good evening. I'd like to  
3 welcome you all to this customer service hearing in  
4 the Florida Power & Light/Gulf Power Company rate  
5 case. Tonight's service hearing is an important  
6 part of the rate-case process and is dedicated to  
7 hearing from you, the customers.

8 My name is Gary Clark. I have the privilege  
9 of serving as the Chairman of the Florida Public  
10 Service Commission. All of our Commissioners are  
11 here with us today and may have some questions for  
12 some of the witnesses a little bit later in the  
13 evening.

14 Let's begin by asking staff to read the  
15 notice, please.

16 MR. STILLER: By notices issued on June 3rd  
17 and 4th, 2021, this time and place has been set for  
18 a customer service hearing in Docket  
19 No. 20210015-EI.

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,  
21 Mr. Stiller.

22 Let's go ahead and take appearances beginning  
23 with Florida Power & Light.

24 MR. BADDERS: Good evening, Commissioners.  
25 Russell Badders with Florida Power & Light Company.

1 I would also like to enter an appearance for Wade  
2 Litchfield.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Badders.

4 OPC.

5 MS. WESSLING: Thank you and good evening. My  
6 name is Mary Wessling. I'm with the Office of  
7 Public Counsel and I would also like to enter an  
8 appearance on behalf of Richard Gentry, Charles  
9 Rehwinkel, Patricia Christensen, and Anastacia  
10 Pirrello. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Wessling.  
12 Florida Rising.

13 MR. LUEBKEMANN: Good evening, Mr. Chairman.  
14 I would like to enter an appearance for myself,  
15 Jordan Luebkekmann, for Florida Rising, LULAC, and  
16 ECOSWF, and also for my colleagues Bradley Marshall  
17 and Christina Reichert. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, sir.

19 Florida executive agencies -- Federal  
20 Executive Agencies. I'm sorry.

21 FIPUG.

22 SACE.

23 FRF.

24 Vote Solar. Vote Solar.

25 CLEO.

1 Walmart.

2 Larsons.

3 FAIR, Mr. Wright.

4 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good  
5 evening. Robert Scheffel Wright on behalf of  
6 Floridians Against Increased Rates, Inc. I'd also  
7 like to enter an appearance for my law partner,  
8 John Thomas Lavia, III. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Wright.  
10 Staff counsel.

11 MR. STILLER: Shaw Stiller for Commission  
12 staff. I'd also like to enter an appearance for  
13 Suzanne Brownless and Bianca Lherisson.

14 MS. HELTON: And Mary Anne Helton is here as  
15 your advisor. I'd also like to enter an appearance  
16 for Keith Hetrick, your general counsel.

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
18 much. Did I get every party?

19 All right. Let me begin by thanking all of  
20 you tonight for calling in to this customer service  
21 hearing. We appreciate your interest in the  
22 petition that's been filed by Florida Power & Light  
23 and by Gulf Power Company.

24 As I mentioned, this hearing is designed so  
25 that we can hear directly from you, the customers.



1 This is your opportunity to express your thoughts,  
2 concerns, and comments related to the utility's  
3 request. In August, there's going to be a  
4 technical hearing where the Commission will  
5 undertake evidence and -- the substance and  
6 evidence of this case.

7 If you would like to speak to an FPL or Gulf  
8 Power customer service representative, a  
9 representative can be reached by calling  
10 (833)407-2007. They are available on the line  
11 tonight to answer any technical or billing  
12 questions that you, the customers, have.

13 We also have PSC staff also available to take  
14 questions tonight by calling (850)413-6427.

15 This is an official hearing that will be  
16 transcribed and become part of the official record.  
17 As such, I will swear you in over the phone before  
18 you share your comments. Please note, your sub- --  
19 your comments will be subject to cross-examination;  
20 that is, you may be asked questions by the parties  
21 or by one of the Commissioners.

22 I would like to also remind customers that you  
23 are not allowed to ask questions of other  
24 customers. Questions are reserved for parties,  
25 intervenors, and Commissioners.

1           I would also like to give you a couple of  
2 reminders. Please keep your phone on mute at all  
3 times until you are called upon to speak. I'll do  
4 my best to call out three names in advance so  
5 you'll have a little bit of advance notice before  
6 we get to you. If you would be prepared to take  
7 your phone off of mute once your name is called and  
8 you are recognized to speak, that would be a great  
9 help to us.

10           Each party tonight is going to be given three  
11 minutes to speak. We are going to stick to a very  
12 strict schedule. Each party will be given three  
13 minutes. At about three minutes, you will hear a  
14 bell. At about three minutes and 15 seconds, you  
15 will hear another bell. We ask that you please  
16 conclude your comments immediately at that point.  
17 We appreciate the professional nature of these  
18 proceedings and ask that you also be courteous to  
19 those who have taken time to call in today.

20           Also, as a reminder, if we call your name,  
21 you're not available or do not answer when we call,  
22 please do not interrupt the other speakers because  
23 you missed your turn. We will come back to you at  
24 the very end when all speakers have been heard from  
25 and you'll be given an opportunity to speak as

1 well.

2 At this time, I'm going to invite FPL to make  
3 a brief opening statement, followed by OPC. Then  
4 we'll have a brief statement from some of the  
5 parties.

6 Mr. Badders.

7 MR. BADDERS: Thank you, Chairman Clark.  
8 Christopher Chapel will be making our opening  
9 remarks tonight.

10 MR. CHAPEL: Thank you, Russell. Thank you,  
11 Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, and thank you to  
12 all of our customers who have taken the time to be  
13 with us here this evening.

14 Before I begin tonight, I'd like to extend our  
15 thoughts and prayers to the families affected by  
16 the horrible tragedy in Surfside, Miami. At times  
17 like this, we are reminded that our customers are  
18 our friends, our neighbors, and our families. Our  
19 hearts are broken. We have a team on-site and will  
20 continue to provide whatever support and help we  
21 can.

22 As Russell said, my name is Christopher Chapel  
23 and I'm the vice president of customer service for  
24 Florida Power & Light Company. As you know, Gulf  
25 Power and FPL have merged into a single company,

1 serving more than 5.6 million customer accounts  
2 across more than half of Florida from Pensacola to  
3 Miami. I'm proud to be a part of the team that now  
4 has the privilege and mission of providing you with  
5 electricity that is cleaner and more reliable and  
6 increasingly affordable.

7 We are a regulated energy company. This means  
8 the Public Service Commission oversees our rates  
9 and operations to ensure we deliver safe and  
10 reliable service at a fair price. To that end, we  
11 are requesting new base rates phased in over four  
12 years beginning in 2022.

13 If approved, our four-year rate plan would  
14 begin to transition Gulf Power customers' rates  
15 into alignment with FPL customers' rates, which  
16 today, in most instances are considerably lower.

17 To accommodate the initial difference in the  
18 cost of serving the existing FPL and Gulf Power  
19 service areas, we're proposing a surcharge for Gulf  
20 Power customers that would decrease each year and  
21 ultimately decline to zero in five years.

22 Importantly, under our proposal, Gulf Power's  
23 typical residential customer bill would be lower at  
24 the end of the four-year plan than it is today and,  
25 like FPL's, well below the national average.

1           In addition to lowering costs, our proposal  
2           supports investments in clean generation,  
3           infrastructure, and innovative technologies that  
4           will further improve your service. For example, we  
5           converted Gulf Power's former coal plant to run on  
6           a 100-percent cleaner natural gas, dra- --  
7           dramat- -- drastically reducing the carbon-dioxide  
8           emissions rate.

9           And we just built the state-of-the-art solar  
10          energy center in Northwest Florida with two more in  
11          development. All tolled, the new solar plants will  
12          power more than 45,000 homes with emissions-free  
13          electricity.

14          Gulf Power is also more reliable than ever  
15          before. By investing in the energy grid to make it  
16          stronger, smarter, and more storm-resilient, we've  
17          improved reliability 50 percent since 2018. This  
18          means our customers are experiencing fewer outages  
19          and shorter outages when they do occur.

20          We've been able to deliver you this value by  
21          adopting FPL's proven practices and track record.  
22          And this is at the heart of our rate plan. We're  
23          standing by FPL's proven track record and promising  
24          an even better tomorrow, a more-resilient and  
25          sustainable energy future that all of us can depend

1 on.

2 While we're working hard to lower your bill,  
3 we also recognize that some of our customers face  
4 challenges and are struggling to pay their bills  
5 today.

6 During the COVID pandemic, we helped customers  
7 secure financial assistance by connecting them with  
8 third-party programs, providing funding to small  
9 businesses, and the United Way, and through Project  
10 Share. We are here to help customers and have  
11 employees available right now to assist. The  
12 number is (833)407-2007.

13 In closing, we are committed to serving you  
14 today while always looking over the horizon so  
15 we're ready to meet your energy -- energy needs  
16 tomorrow.

17 We're looking forward to hearing from you.  
18 This is your opportunity. We want to hear what we  
19 do well. To that end, we've asked our customers  
20 who've said they value our service to share their  
21 thoughts today. More importantly, though, we want  
22 to know where we can improve.

23 So, thank you for your participation today.  
24 We certainly appreciate that you've taken the time  
25 to join us and offer your feedback. And thank you

1 for the opportunity to serve you.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Chapel.

3 Next up is going to be OPC, Ms. Wessling.

4 MS. WESSLING: Thank you and good evening.

5 Again, my name is Mary Wessling and I'm with the  
6 Office of Public Counsel. We are an office within  
7 the Legislature set up to represent you, the  
8 ratepayers of Florida Power & Light and Gulf.

9 We are investigating the Florida Power & Light  
10 and Gulf rate request in this matter. To help us  
11 we have hired experts in accounting, depreciation,  
12 cost of capital, and other regulatory matters. We  
13 will try to get the best rate for you, the  
14 ratepayers, that we can.

15 Today we are here in order to hear from the  
16 customers about your experiences with Florida  
17 Power & Light and Gulf, whether they be good or  
18 bad. We thank you for taking the time to attend  
19 this hearing and give your input.

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very  
21 much, Ms. Wessling.

22 Ms. Lug- -- Mr. Lug-man -- Florida Rising.

23 MR. LUEBKEMANN: I'm so sorry, Mr. Chairman.  
24 I didn't understand the first time.

25 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, and

1           thank you to all the customers who have taken the  
2           time to speak tonight. My name is Jordan  
3           Luebkekmann, and I represent Florida Rising, the  
4           League of United Latin American Citizens of  
5           Florida, and the Environmental Confederation of  
6           Southwest Florida in this proceeding.

7                        These organizations have missions spanning  
8           environmental conservation, economic and civil  
9           rights, and environmental and climate justice, but  
10          all three are in this case to oppose FPL's attempts  
11          to raise rates by 20 percent, or 40 percent for  
12          Gulf's customers if FPL's and Gulf's rates remain  
13          separate.

14                       This rate increase is completely unnecessary  
15          to provide for grid reliability. Instead, the hike  
16          allows FPL to increase their profits and pay for  
17          unneded fossil-fuel gas plants and overbuilt  
18          transmission upgrades among other needless  
19          expenses.

20                       We have been listening and know that many of  
21          you have noticed service crews working on your  
22          transmission lines, restoring power after storms.  
23          Those activities would be predominantly not paid  
24          from the \$6.5 billion in additional rates that FPL  
25          is seeking in this docket. FPL doesn't need to



1 charge you one cent more to pay for that work.

2 And we have heard that you, like us,  
3 understand the need to swiftly develop clean energy  
4 in Florida, but again, FPL could build all the  
5 solar the state needs without raising its rates.

6 Furthermore, when FPL talks about reliability,  
7 it's important to remember that it also  
8 disconnected over half a million households during  
9 the pandemic for not being able to keep up with  
10 their bills.

11 We ask what reliability is if you can't afford  
12 to keep the lights on because your bill is already  
13 too high. By raising rates by another 20 percent,  
14 or 40 percent for Gulf customers if rates remain  
15 separate, how many more Floridans will be unable to  
16 afford their bills? That's why we will be asking  
17 that FPL's rate hike be denied.

18 Thank you, again, for all being here tonight  
19 to share your experiences. Thank you,  
20 Mr. Commissioner -- Mr. Chair.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much.

22 Mr. Wright.

23 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good  
24 evening.

25 Before I continue, I want to say that I join

1 my prayers with those -- all the prayers of those  
2 who are praying for the people affected by the  
3 disaster in Surfside and their families.

4 My name is Robert Scheffel Wright. I go by  
5 "Schef." I was born in Miami and I've been working  
6 on energy matters in Florida for more than 40  
7 years, including service in Governor Bob Graham's  
8 energy office, and seven years of service on the  
9 staff at the Florida Public Service Commission.

10 This evening, I have the privilege to  
11 represent Floridians Against increased Rates, Inc.,  
12 a Florida non-profit corporation, and the more-  
13 than-500 FPL customers whom we count among our  
14 more-than-600 members. On behalf of FAIR, I -- I  
15 welcome you and -- to participate in these hearings  
16 the best you can.

17 I want to be clear about one thing from the  
18 outset: One, we oppose this increase, the proposed  
19 increase, but -- from the viewpoint of customers,  
20 from the viewpoint of FAIR, we want a healthy FPL,  
21 but our position is simply that FPL should have  
22 enough money, not too much. It is FPL's duty and  
23 responsibility, it is FPL's job to provide safe and  
24 reliable service at the lowest possible cost.

25 FPL has thousands of good, solid, hardworking

1 people out there keeping the lights on, and we  
2 salute them; however, the evidence in this case  
3 will show that FPL's request, which is the largest  
4 by far in Florida history, would give FPL way more  
5 money than it needs to do their job. Their request  
6 is unfair and unreasonable.

7 The unfairness is this: FPL does not need the  
8 extra \$1.1 billion of your -- customers' -- money  
9 that they're trying to get next year and they don't  
10 need all of what they're asking for in 2023, '24,  
11 or '25 either.

12 Even if FPL got no increase at all, they could  
13 pay all their expenses, pay all their workers every  
14 cent they claim they're going to pay them in their  
15 rate-case filing, pay all their interest expense,  
16 buy all the wire, conductor, transformers, and  
17 everything else, cover all the carrying costs of  
18 their existing and projected investments next year,  
19 and still have more than \$2 billion profits left  
20 over.

21 And it's worse than that. They want to use  
22 value, surplus value, that your -- customers' --  
23 payments will create using an accounting mechanism  
24 they call a depreciation reserve surplus to pad  
25 their profits even more, up to an extra

1 billion-and-a-half dollars over the next four  
2 years.

3 FAIR and our witnesses have filed and will  
4 pres- -- present in the main hearing in this case  
5 detailed evidence that demonstrates FPL does not  
6 need the increase. And we will work hard to  
7 prevent them from getting anything they don't need.

8 Tell the Commissioners what you think. Thanks  
9 for partic- -- participating, and thank you for  
10 your attention.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,  
12 Mr. Wright.

13 Any other parties on the line?

14 All right. We will move into the customer  
15 service hearing portion of tonight's hearing. Just  
16 a reminder, we want to give everyone an opportunity  
17 to speak that has signed up tonight. You have  
18 three minutes once you are recognized. At the  
19 three-minute point, you will hear a bell ring.  
20 Please wrap your comments up when you hear the  
21 bell. In case you don't hear it, you'll hear  
22 another one at 3:15, and then I will interrupt you  
23 at the 3:20 mark.

24 I'm going to call you in groups of three. So,  
25 please be prepared to speak. First three speakers

1 are Michael Myhre, Christy Rogers, and Cindy Birge.

2 Michael Myhre, are you on the line?

3 MR. MYHRE: Present. Yes, I am.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You're recognized, sir.

5 MR. MYHRE: Thank you. My name is Michael  
6 Myhre. I'm a resident of Pensacola Beach and I am  
7 a customer of Florida Power & Light.

8 Chairman Clark, members of the Commission,  
9 thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf  
10 of and in favor of Gulf Power and its parent  
11 company, Florida Power & Light. I am not only a  
12 customer, but I have served as a partner of Gulf  
13 Power and FPL during some of the most trying and  
14 difficult times faced by our great state over the  
15 past decade.

16 From 2010 until October of 2020, I have served  
17 as the CEO of the Florida SBDC, the state's Small  
18 Business Development Agency. And one of the areas  
19 that I took greatest pride in the work in which we  
20 performed was in the aftermath of a disaster event.

21 As a member of our state emergency response  
22 team, the Florida SBDC has been known as the  
23 state's leader for business response and recovery  
24 and, as such, we were committed to being the first  
25 responders and on the front lines after a disaster

1 to ensure our state's principal job creators and  
2 economic contributors had what they needed to  
3 successfully navigate the overly-complex and  
4 lengthy recovery process.

5 But we never stood alone during these  
6 difficult times. We worked alongside our federal,  
7 our state, and other partners, including Gulf Power  
8 and Florida Power & Light, to ensure our small  
9 businesses had what they needed to reopen, rebuild  
10 and, most importantly, reemploy Floridians after a  
11 disaster event.

12 An exemplary example of such collaboration was  
13 in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, one of the  
14 worst disasters I have ever seen in my 30-year  
15 career. This Category 5 storm knocked out power to  
16 an entire regional economy. Communities,  
17 businesses, homes, and livelihoods were at risk of  
18 being lost forever. Recognizing this, I witnessed  
19 firsthand the strategic-yet-thoughtful investments  
20 that Gulf Power made to restore power to the region  
21 in 13 days after the storm.

22 As I engaged hundreds of small business owners  
23 in the days and months following this storm, I  
24 heard time and time again how the quick response  
25 and restoration of power contributed to their

1 ability to reopen and save their business and their  
2 life's work.

3 As a customer, I've also been a benefactor to  
4 the investments made by Gulf Power. During  
5 Hurricane Sally last fall, our home never lost  
6 power, which I attribute to the investments and the  
7 upgrades and the underground utilities/  
8 infrastructure in our area.

9 So, Chairman, Commissioners for these reasons,  
10 I fully support FPL's continuing efforts to invest  
11 in the needs of our community and our state.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,  
14 Mr. Myhre, for -- for being here with us tonight.

15 Next up -- again, one quick reminder to our  
16 intervenors and to Commissioners, if you have  
17 questions for any of the witnesses, please feel  
18 free to interrupt me. I'm not going to call for  
19 questions after each witness. So, we'll just kind  
20 of move through them a little more expeditiously.

21 Next up, Christy Rogers.

22 MS. ROGERS: Hi. My name is Christy Rogers  
23 and I am a -- been a Gulf Power customer for last  
24 decade. I live in Panama City, Florida, in the  
25 Cove area. And I reiterate everything that the

1 person before me said about the response.

2 After Hurricane Michael, I saw firsthand just  
3 the massive efforts that they -- they made to have  
4 the different sites set up and to get power back to  
5 our community quick.

6 I also appreciated the -- the storm-duty  
7 reports that they did at the end of every day.  
8 They talked about -- they had a -- like a one-page  
9 kind of thing that they updated a board that said  
10 what percentage they had been able to restore, what  
11 their time line was to restore everyone who was  
12 able to receive power, and gave that update  
13 continually, every single day.

14 Even though I was in the last 10 percent of  
15 people to get power that were eligible to receive  
16 power, I was still really thankful to know that  
17 they were working and the progress was being made.

18 I have also -- I really enjoy communication  
19 from their social-media team. Their commenting,  
20 not just after hurricanes, but whenever there's  
21 outages due to storms or for any reason, they  
22 communicate. If there's things going on, they  
23 respond when people ask questions. So, that's  
24 really nice.

25 I also utilize the auto-payment option. And



1           it's -- one thing that I really appreciate that  
2           Gulf Power does that other companies that I  
3           participate in auto-payment don't is that they  
4           communicate what the amount of my bill is going to  
5           be by e-mail three weeks before they actually  
6           deduct the money out of my account.

7           So, if there were any kind of discrepancy or  
8           issue that I had with my bill, I would be able to  
9           contact their customer service team and address  
10          that before the money is taken out of my account.  
11          Thankfully, I've not had any issues.

12          I've never been more thankful to pay my Gulf  
13          Power bill than the months following Hurricane  
14          Michael. It was money very well spent and I just  
15          really appreciate the reliability of Gulf Power and  
16          Florida Power & Light. I'm thankful that the  
17          lights are always on, that I really don't have to  
18          think about it, except for in times of natural  
19          disaster that, thankfully, are rare.

20          So, I -- I support Gulf Power. I'm a big fan  
21          and I'm a happy customer.

22          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great. Thank you very much  
23          for your testimony today, Ms. Rogers.

24          Ms. Cindy Birge. Cindy Birge.

25          Next up, John Snell.

1 MR. SNELL: Hello?

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. Mr. Snell, you're  
3 recognized.

4 MR. SNELL: Thank you, Mr. Clark,  
5 Commissioners. Appreciate you serving on the  
6 Commission.

7 And I'd like to say that my interface with  
8 Gulf Power has been both at my residence here near  
9 DeFuniak Springs and also in Fort Walton. I am a  
10 part owner of a construction company. My partner  
11 and myself own Design/Build Systems in Fort Walton.  
12 And I interface with Gulf Power on, I would say,  
13 the majority -- more -- more than 50 percent of the  
14 projects that we have and have had since 1995, when  
15 my wife and I came down here to live with our young  
16 son.

17 So, that's how I interface. I'm a customer  
18 because they -- they did the installation work and  
19 the power for our house. We have a 300-amp  
20 service, underground service, which I think they  
21 ran the underground from the pole to the house.  
22 We're very satisfied with that. The engineer who  
23 worked on that project here at our house was Joel  
24 Hughes.

25 And numerous projects, commercial projects

1           that we represented clients from Panama City to  
2           Pensacola, we've -- we've -- you know, DeFuniak,  
3           Fort Walton, all over this -- this Northwest  
4           Florida area, the -- the person that's my go-to guy  
5           is Jim Kubik.

6                     And I call him whenever we have a project  
7           that -- well, first of all, I call him to see if  
8           it's a Gulf Power service to the building. And  
9           then I inform the owner what we're doing and we  
10          plan out the service.

11                    We do the design, through a consultant, of the  
12          electrical. We submit it to Gulf Power, and they  
13          work with us and, in some cases, the owner -- which  
14          I'll talk about in a second -- to come up with cost  
15          for the service.

16                    This project that I want to talk about here is  
17          an example project, was with Magnum Manufacturing.  
18          They -- they -- they're an international company in  
19          Fort Walton Beach, Commercial Park, there. And we  
20          had an issue where we built this building and they  
21          were moving equipment in -- their own equipment in,  
22          and we needed to upgrade the service that we had  
23          originally planned.

24                    We met with the owner. Gulf Power was  
25          invited, we were there, our -- our electrical

1 subcontractor. We met with the owner and it was --  
2 it was just great -- a great experience. Gulf  
3 Power provided whatever the -- whatever the owner  
4 wanted.

5 And I'd just like to say that my experience  
6 with Gulf Power has been just like that, since  
7 1995. So, I support them and I support an increase  
8 in rates.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
10 testimony today, Mr. Snell. Good to have you with  
11 us this evening.

12 MR. SNELL: Thank you, sir.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up is Todd Thomson.

14 MR. THOMSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. --

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Todd --

16 MR. THOMSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and  
17 Commissioners. And yeah, I'd also like to send,  
18 from Pensacola, our prayers for those that were  
19 impacted in southwest -- or South Florida by the  
20 tragedy last week. You -- y'all are definitely on  
21 our minds.

22 I do want to speak from the role of -- I am  
23 the ESF18 lead when we have -- when we are called  
24 into the EOC here in Escambia County. And my  
25 experience last fall, when Hurricane Sally hit, and

1 Gulf Power -- and I do want to say I'm a Gulf  
2 Power/Florida Power & Light customer.

3 But my experience with Gulf Power and Florida  
4 Power & Light in the aftermath of Sally was -- was  
5 just -- it was tremendous. They were on scene at  
6 the emergency operations center. As one of the  
7 earlier witnesses stated, you know, they did a  
8 tremendous job of providing information, where they  
9 would be working, how they would be working,  
10 they -- they would be -- you know, working safely,  
11 and, you know, working to -- to get power restored  
12 as quickly as possible.

13 And I can tell you, on my daily commute from  
14 my home to the emergency operations center, I would  
15 drive past the staging area at Pensacola State  
16 College and see all of the trucks that were lined  
17 up, ready to go, and it -- and the men and women  
18 who were working there that -- some were taking  
19 breaks, but you know, they -- there was constant,  
20 you know, motion. They were -- they were working  
21 all the time.

22 And you know, the -- the leadership visit- --  
23 visited us at the emergency operations center.  
24 They kept us apprized of what was happening and, in  
25 my opinion, restored power to our area in a really

1 expedited period of time, faster than I thought was  
2 really possible and faster than I've seen in  
3 previous storms.

4 So, I am speaking in favor of -- of their rate  
5 filing and I am a satisfied customer of Gulf Power  
6 and Florida Power & Light.

7 Thank you for the opportunity.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Thomson, for  
9 being with us this evening.

10 Next speaker is Juanita Finney.

11 MS. FINNEY: Good afternoon --

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Juanita, you're recognized.

13 MS. FINNEY: Can you hear me, sir?

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Ms. Finney. You're  
15 recognized.

16 MS. FINNEY: Yes, good evening -- good  
17 afternoon.

18 I'm a Gulf Power residential customer and I  
19 have been for about 17 years. And I wanted to  
20 speak as to the quality of the service that I've  
21 received. I've had other power providers, so I  
22 have a point of reference. My experience has been  
23 positive with the services as well as the staff.

24 Like others have said before me, I believe  
25 they did an exceptional job after Michael. It was

1 not my first hurricane, but I believe they did an  
2 exceptional job.

3 Just regular customer service -- everything  
4 from calling to have lines removed for tree  
5 cutting, repairing street lights -- I love, like a  
6 previous caller said, the way they keep you  
7 notified, automatically with power, restoration,  
8 and things like that.

9 I think they've done an exceptional job.  
10 Everything from reliability, to their promptness  
11 when they're responding to outages, to just  
12 regular, everyday customer service -- I believe it  
13 has been excellent.

14 And I thank you for an opportunity to speak.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for your testimony  
16 today, Ms. Finney.

17 Next up is Ms. Valery Lawton. Ms. Lawton, are  
18 you on the line?

19 MS. LAWTON: I am. Good evening, everyone.  
20 Thank you, Mr. Commissioner and the -- and  
21 Mr. Chairman -- I'm sorry -- and the Commissioners,  
22 and all --

23 (Background speakers.)

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I'm sorry for that  
25 interruption. You may continue.

1 MS. LAWTON: That's okay. Yes, thank you,  
2 Mr. Chairman and -- and everyone that serves in all  
3 of their different and various capacities to assure  
4 that the citizens of Chipley, Florida, receive  
5 power.

6 My family has been a Gulf Power customer for  
7 50-plus years. Okay. And there have not been any  
8 complaints, and we are satisfied customers with  
9 Gulf Power. Gulf Power does what it says it will  
10 do. So, with the merging of -- of both of these  
11 companies, as long as the Southern Company [sic]  
12 continues to provide excellent customer service, I  
13 am satisfied either way.

14 I mean, you know, yes, there may be -- we may  
15 struggle paying a bill, but so far we -- that has  
16 not happened. Others may struggle paying the bill  
17 if there are rate increases, but I am sure, in the  
18 end, it will all work out well in one way or the  
19 other.

20 And I am all about, your know, the goal -- the  
21 ultimate goal, which is to provide clean energy.  
22 That's -- that's very important and it's in  
23 line with, you know, everything that's going on in  
24 our nation and in our country today.

25 So, yes, I'm very pleased -- a very pleased



1 customer. Gulf Power always does what Gulf Power  
2 says it will do. So, thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for being here with  
4 us this evening, Ms. Lawton.

5 Next up, next three people to testify are  
6 Holly Strout -- excuse me, two people -- Holly  
7 Strout and Rosanna Meyer. Ms. Meyer, if you're on  
8 the line, I'll have to swear you in, in a moment.

9 Holly Strout, are you available?

10 MS. STROUT: Yes. Thank you for hearing my  
11 feedback this evening.

12 As a native Floridian, I currently have two  
13 homes, one in Volusia County with Duke Energy and  
14 one in Bay County with Gulf Power. Both homes are  
15 comparable in size. I own my Volusia County home  
16 and have had energy upgrades through Duke Energy's  
17 home programs. My home in Bay County is  
18 considerabl- -- considerably less each month in  
19 electric costs and it's an older home.

20 With Gulf Power, I have better service, have  
21 had no power outages issues during storms, and I  
22 pay approximately \$77 a month. In Volusia County,  
23 I have a monthly bill of close to 177, over twice  
24 as much as Gulf Power.

25 I have power outages during a simple sun

1 shower. That's quite normal. And the customer  
2 service is poor. It's absolutely unbelievably  
3 unacceptable. Each home has the air conditioner  
4 set to 77 degrees and only has one person residing  
5 in it. I pay my Gulf Power bill as soon as it is  
6 received and feel that the value I have received  
7 from Gulf Power far exceeds Duke Energy's services.

8 Thank you, again, for allowing me to offer my  
9 feedback.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,  
11 Ms. Strout.

12 Rosanna Meyer --

13 MS. MEYER: Good evening --

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: -- are you on the line?

15 (Whereupon, Rosanna Meyer was sworn by  
16 Chairman Clark.)

17 MS. MEYER: Yes.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You're recognized.

19 MS. MEYER: We own two properties in Pompano  
20 Beach, Florida, and we're proud customers of FPL.  
21 I'm a broker-owner of a real estate company and I  
22 do work with a lot of internationals and out-of-  
23 state buyers.

24 We often speak about the reliability of our  
25 electrical grid and the importances to keep

1 improving, maintaining the system so, when an  
2 emergency occurs, the downtime without power is  
3 minimized.

4 On my own personal experience, we have  
5 relocated from Puerto Rico 15 years ago. And I  
6 have an experience firsthand. A transformer blew  
7 up on our street. We called FPL and the crew  
8 arrived in less than 15 minutes. After  
9 observation, they were able to find the problem  
10 and, in one hour, the problem was solved. That  
11 would have never happened in Puerto Rico.

12 I am in favor of the rate increase to keep up  
13 building our infrastructure and be prepared, our  
14 grid, for our future. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
16 testimony.

17 Next three speakers will be Bertisha Combs,  
18 Noemi Salvador Lucero, Ms. Julie Wraithmell.

19 Bertisha Combs, are you on the line?

20 MS. COMBS: Hello. Yes. Can you hear me?

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, you're recognized.

22 MS. COMBS: Hi. My name is Bertisha Combs.

23 I'm a Florida Power & Light customer, have been for  
24 about 20 years now. It's great to hear that  
25 everybody else has, like, such great customer

1 service experiences with FP&L, but the same is  
2 not -- I don't have that same experience.

3 I live in a predominantly-black neighborhood  
4 and our power goes out for no reason at all at  
5 least three or four times a year. Normally, we get  
6 a text message and it takes about four to five  
7 hours for them to reinstall the power.

8 Also, other people in my community --  
9 they're -- they have to put down two-months deposit  
10 in order to have their service, but if they're late  
11 on their payments, that money never comes out of  
12 the deposit. So, now they have to scramble to come  
13 up with more money in order to pay that bill, even  
14 though FP&L is already holding their money.

15 I do not support this 20-percent increase  
16 because, just like FP&L saying they're suffering,  
17 there are several other people in low-income  
18 communities that have been suffering during this  
19 pandemic and they just cannot afford another  
20 20 percent on top of what we already pay.

21 I got my bill this month. It's \$126, but only  
22 \$33 of that is from fuel costs. The rest is from  
23 taxes, fees, surcharges, non-fuel stuff, all this  
24 other stuff. So, if FP&L can find the way to lower  
25 the bill, that will help the majority of the people

1 in the state of Florida.

2 Thank you for your time.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,  
4 Ms. Combs.

5 Noemi Salvador Lucero.

6 MS. LUCERO: Good evening, members of the  
7 Commission. I want to thank you for gifting me  
8 this time. My name is Noemi Salvador, and I am  
9 (unintelligible) Kichwa Nation and an organizer for  
10 Florida Rising.

11 Today I'm testifying against FPL's proposed  
12 rate increase. I work closely with communities  
13 that are consistently made by design to be low-  
14 income. We monitor the condition of these  
15 communities by constantly running phone banks and  
16 community events where questions like, are you able  
17 to meet this month's bill, and do you have  
18 sufficient money to afford food for the month, are  
19 asked.

20 And it pains me to say that many times answers  
21 like, I am not sure where my next meal is going to  
22 come from, and I do not have enough to keep basic  
23 services connected, are common responses.

24 This proposed rate increase is unreasonable  
25 and has no merit. The fundamentals of this

1 decision go against the moral standards we opt to  
2 operate under a global pandemic.

3 I am sure FPL's pocket has suffered, but not  
4 as much as those who have been violently  
5 dispossessed from their houses, leaving many  
6 members of our organization unsheltered, and those  
7 who remain housed with the inability to meet their  
8 needs.

9 I'd like to thank -- I'd also like to talk  
10 about the health risks FPL exposes our communities  
11 to. My job requires for me to also see after the  
12 land's health. The chemical shape of methane is  
13 brutally effective at trapping heat and, therefore,  
14 a hazard to our journey to survival on the climate  
15 crisis.

16 There are countless studies done on how  
17 exposure to methane affects the reproductive and  
18 respiratory capabilities of these who are placed  
19 close to these type of facilities. And knowing  
20 that 70 percent of the energy produced by FPL comes  
21 from fossil gas -- this plan, if approved, will  
22 leak toxics into our life-giving sources on a  
23 consistent basis, which ends up being, by  
24 statistics, poor and mostly of-non-European  
25 descent.

1           The guidelines for FPL's customer service does  
2           not align with the definition of proper customer  
3           care. Instead of working with customers to  
4           negotiate possible solutions with those who have  
5           outstanding debt, they have disconnected over  
6           500,000 families.

7           This is a tactic used to place -- to please  
8           shareholders and, perhaps you could agree, an  
9           epithetic tactic that contradicts their, I quote,  
10          "... great and reliable customer care," end of  
11          quote.

12          In conclusion, FPL strives for a bigger return  
13          on equity at the expense of the customers' pocket.  
14          They do not share Florida's climate-impact-recovery  
15          plans. And until we do not have a system in place  
16          that does not treat low-income and low-income-  
17          (unintelligible) communities as disposable, the  
18          responsibility of bodies like this Commission is to  
19          protect those who work tirelessly to ensure their  
20          little ones have food over their tables and shelter  
21          to protect them in a difficult yet a place worth  
22          fighting for.

23          Thank you for listening.

24          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
25          testimony this evening.

1           Next up is Ms. Julie Wraithmell.

2           MS. WRAITHMELL: Thank you, Chairman Clark and  
3 members of the PSC. I'm Julie Wraithmell,  
4 executive director of Audubon Florida.

5           Audubon is Florida's oldest statewide  
6 conservation organization, advocating for Florida's  
7 natural resources for more than 120 years. We have  
8 45 grassroots chapters around the state and employ  
9 staff statewide with our operational headquarters  
10 based in Miami.

11           We recognize that climate change is the  
12 greatest threat that these resources has ever  
13 faced, and Florida Power & Light has a critical  
14 role in helping Florida meet this challenge.

15           A portion of the innovations that will be  
16 supported by FP&L's requested rate increase include  
17 FP&L's 30-by-30 initiative, a plan to install  
18 30 million solar panels by 2030; the conversion of  
19 the Crist Power Plant from coal to natural-gas-  
20 fired generation; the Okeechobee Clean Energy  
21 Center pilot, which will allow FP&L to determine  
22 how a green hydrogen-fuel-producing facility can be  
23 effectively used with gas-fired units to produce a  
24 supplemental carbon-free fuel source; and, finally,  
25 FP&L is building a 400-megawatt battery-storage



1 facility powered by an existing solar plant. And  
2 we -- we all know that solar -- that storage is key  
3 to solar serving Floridians around the clock.

4 Florida's fuel-source mix has one of the  
5 lowest proportions of renewables of any state in  
6 the nation, but that's changing and there's a  
7 substantial public interest in radically expanding  
8 renewables quickly.

9 Audubon supports and encourages advancements  
10 in alternative-energy generation when it is  
11 responsibly sited, supporting wildlife habitat,  
12 protecting natural resources, and respecting and  
13 engaging with local communities.

14 As a result, Audubon requests that you follow  
15 your staff's recommendation to approve FP&L's  
16 proposed rate increase to allow FP&L to continue to  
17 invest in its plan to strengthen the grid against  
18 storms and hurricanes, provide new sources of clean  
19 energy, and accommodate customer growth.

20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
22 testimony this evening, Ms. Wraithmell.

23 Next three speakers will be Leonel Picun.

24 Anitrice McKinnis-Jackson, Louis Aguirre.

25 We'll begin with Mr. Picun. Leonel Picun.

1                   Next, Anitrice McKinnis-Jackson. Anitrice  
2                   McKinnis-Jackson.

3                   Louis Aguirre -- Aguirre.

4                   MR. AGUIRRE: Yes, good afternoon. And thank  
5                   you for taking my -- the time for listening to me,  
6                   but it's been a long, long wait. This time, I'm  
7                   running out of time, but I'm a satisfied company of  
8                   the Florida Power & Light Company for the past 65  
9                   years.

10                  I have nothing to add or to deduct for the  
11                  comments that have been give to us this afternoon.  
12                  So, thank you so much. You have a good night.

13                  CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, sir, for  
14                  testifying.

15                  The next three speakers will be Madame Renita  
16                  Homes, Lisa Williams, and Laura Quizena.

17                  Madame Renita Homes, are you on the line?

18                  MS. HOMES: Yes, good evening, Mr. Chairman  
19                  and all. And thanks to everyone for listening and  
20                  participating.

21                  This is my first hearing. It's been a while  
22                  since I've really paid attention to what's really  
23                  going on because I've been living life in the  
24                  African-American inner-city community going through  
25                  a crisis which seems to have an indifference.

1           A lot of respect goes out to the folks at  
2           Surfside who lost so many lives due to the  
3           situation that's a thing so evil and harmful now,  
4           unnecessary.

5           I'm calling tonight because I'm concerned  
6           about how FP&L responds to the African-American  
7           inner-city community when it comes to lighting,  
8           when it comes to how many deaths that I've  
9           witnessed under poles with very low lighting.

10          I live in Miami, Miami-Dade County. And I  
11          know too many things and have taken pictures of  
12          incidents and murder scenes with the lighting still  
13          on, but very low, to the point where even the  
14          police department has had to utilize -- has had to  
15          utilize their own special lighting.

16          I want to thank the Public Counsel for at  
17          least doing what they can to extend the  
18          opportunity, but we know that most inner-city  
19          communities that you heard, I think, Ms. Bertisha  
20          Combs speak of -- one lady -- and you heard the  
21          other gentleman -- we hardly participate in the  
22          enhancement parts, which seems to be what we've put  
23          out here with this rate-case fallacy.

24          It plagues on me and I -- I don't really trust  
25          it because I know there are many other

1 organizations, like the CLEO Institute that works  
2 well to educate us, who believes that we're  
3 competent, believes that we know what double-  
4 dipping is when we're paying for our bills.

5 But we're here trying to save our community  
6 for our children, but there's no lighting, but what  
7 I've got is a lot of intruding cable and what I've  
8 got is a low response. I've got -- I have got low  
9 lighting. What I've got is paying extra money, you  
10 know, when I can't afford the deposit that I cannot  
11 afford. And then we're constantly moving while I'm  
12 seeing 5G towers get put up anywhere.

13 And so, I see the enhancements for some folks,  
14 but it's an intrusion for a lot of us. I see the  
15 ability to respond to crises for things that are  
16 immediate, but when we talk about an ongoing crisis  
17 of violence and gun violence and it happens -- I  
18 saw three murders in less than a month under  
19 lighting which was so very low, poles that were  
20 already stripped. I don't want to talk about my  
21 experience during FEMA -- as a FEMA representative  
22 and a respondent.

23 Prioritizing influence, education, and  
24 engaging people who are a little bit more  
25 disparaged -- 20 percent may be average for some,

1 but it's like a hundred percent to us. That's what  
2 I mean when I talk about base-rate-increase and  
3 fallacy.

4 When you're talking about playing on the  
5 behavior or you're practicing a methodology in  
6 corporate profiting and excessive profiting, then  
7 you leave out the real factors and the real story,  
8 like how lighting and -- and quality of service and  
9 access as a person with disabilities has -- what we  
10 have to say about it.

11 So, I'm bouncing around here really fast, but  
12 I really think I don't need to because I hear you  
13 listening. So, can you tell me, if we have this  
14 type of relationship with not-for-profits who  
15 represent and a lot that are okay with doing  
16 environmental, who understand it, but never reach  
17 down to those who are poor and living in places  
18 where all of these environmental fractions and  
19 enhancements are really needed, but only seem to be  
20 places where people deposit their tools and -- and  
21 their materials -- well, I'm concerned about that  
22 because I can continue to pay -- and if I can't  
23 pay, LIHEAP will cover it. So, I'm paying as a  
24 taxpayer, I'm paying as a --

25 CHAIRMAN CLARK: -- can you please --

1 MS. HOMES: -- because they're --

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Please wrap up your --

3 Ms. Homes, wrap up your comments in five seconds.

4 MS. HOMES: Actually -- actually, I'm -- I'm  
5 wrapping up, but there's no real instance of  
6 honesty when you're -- when you're advocating and  
7 you're receiving funds. So, that's bad influence  
8 and I just don't trust that. There's still that  
9 inequity in my community and the way that  
10 corporations and FP&L build and use the land, but  
11 yet leave us out there --

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you -- thank you for  
13 your --

14 MS. HOMES: So, thank --

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: -- testimony --

16 MS. HOMES: -- thank you very much for  
17 supporting -- yeah, for supporting --

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank -- thank you very much,  
19 sir.

20 Next up, Lisa Williams. I need to swear you,  
21 Ms. Williams, if you're on the line. Lisa  
22 Williams.

23 Next up, Laura Quizena. Laura Quizena.

24 Next is Tatjana Woody. Tatjana Woody.

25 I'm going to do my best with the next one, Emi

1 Abe-Teh.

2 MS. ABE-TEH: Hi, my name is Emi. I'm an  
3 intern with the People's Economic and Environmental  
4 Resiliency group, or the PEER group. The PEER  
5 group advocates for economic and environmental  
6 sustainability in Miami, for a community-lowering  
7 approach that shifts power back to marginalized  
8 communities.

9 We thank you for the opportunity to make this  
10 comment on FPL's four-year rate plan. We are  
11 asking that the PSC deny FPL's rate increase today  
12 for two reasons: First, the rate increase would  
13 most impact people within the community we partner  
14 with, those who have already been marginalized by  
15 systemic and structural inequities.

16 FPL plans to pass the largest rate boost in  
17 Florida history, which would lead to households  
18 eventually paying an extra \$18 per month or \$216 a  
19 year. Approval of this rate increase will  
20 disproportionately affect low-income households,  
21 who already have the highest energy burden or  
22 percentage of household incomes spent on energy  
23 costs.

24 The proposal also calls for a mid-point of  
25 11.5 of the allowed return on equity, allowing FPL

1 to earn between 10.55 percent and 12.5 percent,  
2 which is a significant increase from the currently-  
3 allowed mid-point of 10.55 percent.

4 By allowing for a 2-percent higher return on  
5 equity than the national average for electric  
6 utilities, FPL shareholders become the main  
7 beneficiaries of the proposed rate increase.

8 As millions of Floridians face job loss during  
9 the pandemic, the worst time to raise energy costs  
10 would be now, before we even have a chance to  
11 recover. FPL was one of several power companies  
12 who was closing customer accounts due to non-  
13 payment during the second wave of the pandemic,  
14 disconnecting over 500,000 households over the  
15 course of the pandemic. Now they want to increase  
16 rates and continue taking advantage of their most-  
17 vulnerable customers.

18 The second reason is that FPL's rate increase  
19 does not support a vision of sustainability and a  
20 transition to clean energy, undermining the  
21 opportunity for Florida to be at the forefront of  
22 climate-change resistance.

23 While FPL claims the money from this rate  
24 increase will be used to be build clean energy,  
25 their focus is on natural gas. While natural gas



1 results in fewer emissions of air pollutants and  
2 carbon dioxide than coal, research indicates that  
3 methane leakage is bad enough to make it the  
4 greenhouse equivalent of coal.

5 Additionally, FPL made promises to install  
6 30 million solar panels by 2030 with the 30-by-30  
7 campaign, but have gradually reduced their solar  
8 commitments in the last few years.

9 Finally, these green-energy projects all come  
10 with disclaimers where FPL asserts to not place  
11 undue reliance on these forwarded-looking  
12 statements. If the plan to increase rates is  
13 improved, FPL implements an assured higher price  
14 for electricity bills while only offering the  
15 possibility of any benefit to consumers or to the  
16 environment.

17 Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
19 testimony this evening.

20 And lastly, Sarah Younger. I need to swear  
21 you in, if you're on the line, Ms. Younger.

22 MS. YOUNGER: Hello. Can you hear me?

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, this is Ms. Younger?

24 MS. YOUNGER: Yes, it is.

25 (Whereupon, Sarah Younger was sworn by

1 Chairman Clark.)

2 MS. YOUNGER: Yes, I do.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You're recognized.

4 MS. YOUNGER: Thank you for taking the time to  
5 hear our comments tonight. I live in North Central  
6 Florida, Alachua County, Northwest Alachua County.  
7 I am not an FPL customer at this time. I was an  
8 FPL customer for several decades when I lived down  
9 in West Palm Beach.

10 I'm here to comment tonight because I, too,  
11 recognize that rate increases covered by the PSC  
12 influence more than just the companies that they  
13 are granting those rate increases to because it  
14 becomes a precedent. And I'm very concerned about  
15 this rate increase as it now offers a -- a new  
16 level of investor-owned-utility return, as the  
17 previous caller mentioned.

18 One que- -- one thing I did note in the  
19 justifications that FPL had was that they were  
20 suggesting there's an inflation rate that they're  
21 trying to keeping in -- in con- -- in pace with,  
22 under consumer rate -- inflation rates.

23 I -- I would ask, why would we want to have an  
24 inflationary rate for energy costs when we also  
25 know that they rank one of the lowest in helping

1           those who are energy-burdened to be -- make their  
2           homes more energy efficient and, thereby, save  
3           money on their homes in powering them.

4           I also want to remind this Commission --  
5           because you may not have been serving under the  
6           time of the last decade -- but we can go back and  
7           not even -- a little over a decade ago when the  
8           Sunshine Program was a -- was an offering that FPL  
9           had for consumers to place \$9 a month into an  
10          energy-saving program that they would buy solar  
11          credits under. And that turned out to be a big PR  
12          boondoggle. So, as the previous caller mentioned,  
13          there is absolutely no guarantee that this rate  
14          increase will, in fact, ensure that we have more  
15          solar.

16          I also live in a fairly largely-agricultural  
17          area in North Central Florida, which has become,  
18          now -- a new plant -- type of plant is growing here  
19          called solar farms. Okay. We also need to have  
20          food security, not just energy security.

21          If we take our -- our arable land that's used  
22          for growing food to instead plant solar panels on,  
23          out of -- and -- and, again, this last state  
24          legislative session, they allowed for that to  
25          na- -- almost to double in size before it was

1           called -- called for special PSC review.

2           This -- this is a very harmful industry if  
3           it's not regulated because they could easily  
4           overbuild, overbuild. You're giving them  
5           incentives to build more solar than, perhaps, we  
6           even need at this time.

7           So, I'm not saying that we don't need solar,  
8           but we need it on the built infrastructure and not  
9           on arable land that we need to plant food on. So,  
10          I ask you to deny this rate increase for a variety  
11          of reasons I've just given.

12          And if they're doing such a good job at  
13          disaster relief, why do they need more money?

14          Thank you. Goodbye.

15          CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your  
16          testimony this evening, Ms. Younger.

17          I'd like to go back and pick up any customers  
18          that are registered tonight whose name I called  
19          that did not get an opportunity to testify.

20          All right. Well, that's great. We believe we  
21          got everyone covered. Thank you, again, for taking  
22          time from your schedule to call into this service  
23          hearing this evening. Your comments and testimony  
24          are very important to this process, and we  
25          appreciate you assisting in -- us in these

1 proceedings.

2 If you have any questions, please feel free to  
3 call our staff and discuss it with them. You can  
4 find all of our numbers and e-mail contact  
5 information on the PSC website.

6 Commissioners, do you have any other --  
7 anything to come before us?

8 Staff?

9 Seeing none, we will stand adjourned for the  
10 evening. Thank you.

11 (Whereupon, the proceedings concluded at 7:56  
12 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF LEON )

I, ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED THIS 19th day of July, 2021.



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ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY  
NOTARY PUBLIC  
COMMISSION #HH 089181  
EXPIRES February 9, 2025