

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for rate increase by Florida
Power & Light Company.

DOCKET NO. 160021-EI
ORDER NO. PSC-16-0158-PCO-EI
ISSUED: April 21, 2016

ORDER GRANTING SOUTH FLORIDA HOSPITAL AND
HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION'S PETITION TO INTERVENE

On January 15, 2016, Florida Power & Light Company (FPL) filed a test year letter, as required by Rule 25-6.140, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), notifying this Commission of its intent to file a petition for an increase in its base rates effective 2017. Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 366, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rules 25-6.0425 and 25-6.043, F.A.C., FPL filed its petition for an increase in its rates and charges on March 15, 2016. The hearing for the FPL rate case is scheduled on August 22 through September 2, 2016.

Petition for Intervention

By petition dated April 8, 2016, the South Florida Hospital and Healthcare Association (SFHHA) requested permission to intervene in this proceeding. SFHHA states that it is a regional healthcare provider association which advocates, facilitates, and educates its members, and seeks to improve the health status of its community. SFHHA states that its members are individual healthcare institutions which are FPL customers. SFHHA contends that its members have important concerns regarding FPL's services and rates due to the nature of the services they render and their concern with reliable, consistent levels of service. No party has objected to SFHHA's petition, and the time for doing so has expired.

Standards for Intervention

Pursuant to Rule 25-22.039, F.A.C., persons, other than the original parties to a pending proceeding, who have a substantial interest in the proceeding, and who desire to become parties may petition for leave to intervene. Petitions for leave to intervene must be filed at least five (5) days before the final hearing, conform with Rule 28-106.201(2), F.A.C., and include allegations sufficient to demonstrate that the intervenor is entitled to participate in the proceeding as a matter of constitutional or statutory right or pursuant to Commission rule, or that the substantial interests of the intervenor are subject to determination or will be affected through the proceeding. Intervenors take the case as they find it.

To have standing, the intervenor must meet the two-prong standing test set forth in Agrico Chemical Company v. Department of Environmental Regulation, 406 So. 2d 478, 482 (Fla. 2nd DCA 1981). The intervenor must show that: (1) he will suffer injury in fact which is of sufficient immediacy to entitle him to a Section 120.57, F.S., hearing; and (2) this substantial injury is of a type or nature which the proceeding is designed to protect. The first aspect of the test deals with the degree of injury. The second deals with the nature of the injury. The "injury

in fact” must be both real and immediate and not speculative or conjectural. International Jai-Alai Players Assn. v. Florida Pari-Mutuel Commission, 561 So. 2d 1224, 1225-26 (Fla. 3rd DCA 1990). See also, Village Park Mobile Home Assn., Inc. v. State Dept. of Business Regulation, 506 So. 2d 426, 434 (Fla. 1st DCA 1987), rev. den., 513 So. 2d 1063 (Fla. 1987) (speculation on the possible occurrence of injurious events is too remote).

Further, the test for associational standing was established in Florida Home Builders v. Dept. of Labor and Employment Security, 412 So. 2d 351 (Fla. 1982), and Farmworker Rights Organization, Inc. v. Dept. of Health and Rehabilitative Services, 417 So. 2d 753 (Fla. 1st DCA 1982), which is also based on the basic standing principles established in Agrico. Associational standing may be found where: (1) the association demonstrates that a substantial number of an association’s members may be substantially affected by the Commission’s decision in a docket; (2) the subject matter of the proceeding is within the association’s general scope of interest and activity; and (3) the relief requested is of a type appropriate for the association to receive on behalf of its members.

Analysis & Ruling

It appears that SFHHA meets the two-prong standing test in Agrico as well as the three-prong associational standing test established in Florida Home Builders. SFHHA argues that the Commission’s decision in this case will affect its members’ substantial interests and that its members face immediate injury if the Commission approves FPL’s proposed rates. SFHHA contends that its members are FPL ratepayers. SFHHA further asserts that this is the type of proceeding designed to protect its members’ interests. Therefore, SFHHA’s members meet the two-prong standing test of Agrico.

With respect to the first prong of the associational standing test, SFHHA asserts that substantially all of its members are located in FPL’s service area and receive electric service from FPL, for which they are charged FPL’s applicable service rates. Accordingly, SFHHA states that its members will be substantially affected by this Commission’s determination in this rate proceeding. With respect to the second prong of the associational standing test, the subject matter of the proceeding appears to be within SFHHA’s general scope of interest and activity. SFHHA is a regional healthcare provider association which acts as an advocate on behalf of its member healthcare institutions. As for the third prong of the associational standing test, SFHHA seeks intervention in this docket to represent the interests of its members, as FPL customers, in seeking reliable service and the lowest rates possible. The relief requested by SFHHA is of a type appropriate for an association to obtain on behalf of its members. SFHHA, has requested, and been granted, intervention in FPL’s four prior general rate case and was a signatory to the 2005, 2010, and 2012 settlements executed in those dockets.

Because SFHHA meets the two-prong standing test established in Agrico as well as the three-prong associational standing test established in Florida Home Builders, SFHHA’s petition for intervention shall be granted. Pursuant to Rule 25-22.039, F.A.C., SFHHA takes the case as it finds it.

Based on the foregoing, it is


ORDERED by Commissioner Lisa Polak Edgar, as Prehearing Officer, that the Petition to Intervene filed by the South Florida Hospital and Healthcare Association (SFHHA) is hereby granted as set forth herein. It is further

ORDERED that all parties to this proceeding shall furnish copies of all testimony, exhibits, pleadings and other documents which may hereinafter be filed in this proceeding to:

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By ORDER of Commissioner Lisa Polak Edgar, as Prehearing Officer, this 21st day of April, 2016.



LISA POLAK EDGAR
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Copies furnished: A copy of this document is provided to the parties of record at the time of issuance and, if applicable, interested persons.

SBr

NOTICE OF FURTHER PROCEEDINGS OR JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Florida Public Service Commission is required by Section 120.569(1), Florida Statutes, to notify parties of any administrative hearing or judicial review of Commission orders that is available under Sections 120.57 or 120.68, Florida Statutes, as well as the procedures and time limits that apply. This notice should not be construed to mean all requests for an administrative hearing or judicial review will be granted or result in the relief sought.

Mediation may be available on a case-by-case basis. If mediation is conducted, it does not affect a substantially interested person's right to a hearing.

Any party adversely affected by this order, which is preliminary, procedural or intermediate in nature, may request: (1) reconsideration within 10 days pursuant to Rule 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code; or (2) judicial review by the Florida Supreme Court, in the case of an electric, gas or telephone utility, or the First District Court of Appeal, in the case of a water or wastewater utility. A motion for reconsideration shall be filed with the Office of Commission Clerk, in the form prescribed by Rule 25-22.0376, Florida Administrative Code. Judicial review of a preliminary, procedural or intermediate ruling or order is available if review of the final action will not provide an adequate remedy. Such review may be requested from the appropriate court, as described above, pursuant to Rule 9.100, Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure.