



June 21, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Adam J. Teitzman
Office of Commission Clerk
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

Re: Docket No. 20210015-EI - Petition for rate increase by Florida Power Light & Company.

Dear Mr. Teitzman,

On behalf of Intervenors Florida Rising, I have enclosed the testimony of Leigh Ann Gustavus. Please file these documents in Docket No. 20210015-EI. Please contact me if there are any questions regarding this filing.

/s/ Bradley Marshall

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true copy and correct copy of the foregoing was served on this 21st day of June 2021, via electronic mail on:

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DATED this 21st day of June, 2021.

/s/ Bradley Marshall
Attorney

BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for rate increase)
 by Florida Power & Light) **DOCKET NO. 20210015-EI**
 Company)

DIRECT TESTIMONY
OF LEIGH ANN GUSTAVUS
ON BEHALF OF
FLORIDA RISING

June 21, 2021

1 **Q. Please state your name.**

2 A. Leigh Ann Gustavus.

3 **Q. What organization are you an employee of?**

4 A. I am an employee of Florida Rising.

5 **Q. What are your duties as an employee of Florida Rising?**

6 A. I am the Climate Justice Organizer in North Florida. My role specifically within the
7 organization is to organize and have conversations with the most disaffected communities in
8 the Jacksonville area, specifically communities that are more prone to flooding due to a lack
9 of updated infrastructure and that are the worst hit, with needs last to be addressed, post-
10 disaster. Day-to-day we ensure that people are prepared for hurricane season and ensure that
11 exposure to environmental toxins are not at a level that would be unacceptable to those in
12 upper middle class neighborhoods.

13 **Q. Is your organization a customer of FPL?**

14 A. Yes

15 **Q. How does your organization view FPL?**

16 A. FPL is a massive corporation that enacts its own will and agenda on a huge portion of
17 Florida and it is often not to the public's benefit. We want FPL to develop a better
18 relationship with the community at large and make decisions with the community that are in
19 the community's best interest.

20 **Q. Based on information provided by FPL, the base rate for electricity is projected to
21 increase by about 20%. How would this rate increase impact your organization?**

22 A. Our organization represents lower socio-economic and minority communities and this
23 would impact those communities significantly. These groups do not have a lot of extra
24 income to put towards this basic necessity if rates were to go up. They cannot opt out of
25 paying for their bills. Instead, they would have to buy less groceries that week or forego

1 buying new school clothes for their children because their utility bill is so imperative.

2 **Q. Is your organization concerned about climate change?**

3 **A.** Yes, very much. First and foremost, we are talking about and urging for equity in the
4 response to environmental and climate issues.

5 **Q: Based on information provided by FPL, part of this rate increase will pay for new or**
6 **upgraded methane gas power plants. Does your organization believe this will have an**
7 **impact on the climate?**

8 **A.** Absolutely it does. Methane is prone to leaking at every step from its extraction to
9 transportation to combustion, and is an incredibly potent greenhouse gas when it does. The
10 methane that is burned as intended still produces carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to
11 climate change. Even though not all people in Northeast Florida are FPL customers, for
12 people in low lying, coastal areas, FPL's climate-worsening emissions continue to increase
13 the risks of sea level rise, regardless of the name of the utility on their monthly bill. Also, the
14 emissions that come out of a project like that not only affect greenhouse gas levels but also
15 affect, on a more local scale, the communities surrounding those facilities. Northeast Florida
16 has a long history of poor air quality, and it was only in the 1990s that we got a lot of paper
17 mills out of area. Things are getting to a level with other manufacturers where it is again
18 affecting day-to-day life, so adding to that will be completely detrimental to community
19 health.

20 **Q: In light of that, how does your organization feel about contributing its own money to**
21 **those projects, through its FPL bill?**

22 **A.** We do not want any of our money to go to projects of that nature. To have the opportunity
23 to choose the projects our money is going towards is important because we are the people so
24 affected. FPL has a natural monopoly so we are subject to the decisions they make, but we
25 need true community input.

1 **Q. What is the mission of your organization?**

2 **A.** As a whole, we are a people-powered organization, advancing economic and racial justice
3 in Florida to not only win progressive elections or effect policy and legislation, but to create
4 communities where Black, Latinx, and Indigenous peoples can live happy, healthy, and
5 whole lives.

6 **Q. How is the purpose of your organization being served by participating in this**
7 **proceeding?**

8 **A.** We serve to amplify the voices and needs of the community who will be directly affected
9 by the result of this proceeding. Each of our organizers are talking to the community on a
10 day-to-day basis, developing relationships with other community leaders. Our ears are to the
11 ground. On a personal level, looking at Duval County, we recently went through our utility
12 almost being privatized. Knowing that we would be considered a smaller municipality, we
13 would likely have been bought up by FPL and would be subject to the direct decisions they
14 are making right now. However, smaller energy providers may follow suit with the decisions
15 FPL makes as they are a huge corporation. Even as someone that represents a community and
16 a portion of our members that are not specifically in FPL's territory, it is still relevant that
17 Duval and all other areas of Florida have a voice in this case.

18 **Q. Will a substantial number of your organization's members be substantially affected**
19 **by the Commission's decision in this proceeding? How do you know?**

20 **A.** Florida Rising members who reside in Duval county represent only a fraction of our
21 organization's statewide membership. Outside of Duval, looking to South Florida, we have
22 many members that live in FPL's provider area, including our highest population of
23 members, which is in the Broward and Miami-Dade area. We know this because we know
24 where our members live, we organize around their voting districts, and we are canvassing
25 their neighborhoods.

1 **Q. How is the subject matter of this proceeding within your organization's general**
2 **scope of interest and activity?**

3 **A.** We are concerned when the economic stability of the people in our community is affected.
4 We are organizing for change for people on every front, but economic justice at the forefront
5 because it is the most immediate and pressing issue for people. Before we even talk about an
6 election or coal ash spill-off, we are making sure that people have food to eat. Part of what I
7 do, along with many of our organizers, is connect resources to people. When people are in a
8 dire economic situation, we are connecting them to jobs and monetary resources. Raising the
9 cost of utilities will directly impact people's economic situations.

10 **Q. Why is the relief requested in this proceeding appropriate for your organization to**
11 **receive on behalf of its members?**

12 **A.** Denying the rate increase is the only option for decency, but I do not think I would call it
13 relief. It would not be a relief to not raise the price of a resource FPL has an abundance of
14 and that they make plenty of profit on. Raising the price of a life necessity, after a pandemic
15 that still isn't over and after a long period of wide-spread unemployment where people are
16 dealing with extreme loss, is absurd.

17 **Q. How has your organization engaged with utility matters in the past?**

18 **A.** We were part of the effort to prevent the Jacksonville Electrical Authority (JEA) from
19 being privatized. We also assisted people in the pandemic to help them get their utility bills
20 paid through direct servicers.

21 **Q. Why has it done so?**

22 **A.** Not only is electricity a basic necessity that is not equitably offered to the people in the
23 communities that we represent, but with unpredictable rising costs that aren't in sync with the
24 rising living wage, we have to step in. In addition, we have the pandemic and wide-spread
25 unemployment to address. Economic justice is something we really fight for within our

1 communities and although utilities are a necessity, we feel we have to protect our
2 communities from the high costs.

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