

Sandra Soto

From: Sandra Soto on behalf of Records Clerk
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2017 8:50 AM
To: 'Karen Berry'
Subject: RE: docket #160186-EL

Good morning Ms. Berry,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 160186-EL and forwarding your comments to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Sincerely,

Sandra Soto
Commission Deputy Clerk I
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399
(850) 413-6010

From: Karen Berry [<mailto:karenx3boyz@gmail.com>]
Sent: Saturday, January 28, 2017 8:29 PM
To: Records Clerk
Subject: docket #160186-EL

Concerning docket #160186-EL

To whom it may concern,

My name is Karen Berry, I am a wife and mother of three boys. We currently live in Cordova Park in an older home built in the 1950s. My husband is a truck driver for Lewis Bear and brings home on average \$700 a week. I tell you this in formation because our monthly power bills are anywhere between \$400- \$600+ depending on the season. Of course being in Florida you can only guess more months than not our power bill is \$600 or more for the month. This is almost a complete paycheck for us! Sometimes it is. Our thermostat is kept on 98 during the warm months because we can't afford to run our air-conditioning more than we have to. We have replaced our outdated unit and would love to be able to replace our outdated windows and insulation but we simply cannot afford to do so spending so much on one single bill! Gulf power already has us in a catch-22. We simply can not afford a hike in our power bill. It will simply destroy us financially. Please take my family and so many other like us and in our situation when voting on this matter.

Thank you.

1. Gulf Power can already boast about having the highest base rate in Florida. Right now it's \$18.87 before a light switch is even flipped. Florida Power and Light's base rate is \$7.87, Duke Energy charges \$8.76, and Tampa Electric is still behind Gulf with a base rate of \$16.62. Gulf Power is asking to raise the base rate to \$47.80. That increase is 155%.

2. Gulf Power is eager to use your rate increase to increase the Rate of Return on Equity (ROE) for investors from 10.5% to 11%. Opposing counsel recognizes this as excessive, noting the norm for ROE is below 10% in the current economic climate. Even Gulf investors/customers who enjoy their Gulf dividends spoke out against the rate increase as simple greed at the public hearing.

3. Increasing the base rate for Gulf Power customers will impact those living on fixed incomes and the working poor the most. In fact, because of the way the bill would be calculated, a family like mine won't experience a big financial hit. However, members of our community who already hang their clothes to dry, set the thermostat high in the summer and low in the winter, and use more energy efficient everything will feel the brunt of this increase.

4. This increase smacks of systematic oppression of the poor by the super wealthy. The increase takes financial control and stability away from those who need it most. Again, conserving energy will have little impact on reducing your monthly power bill (this is a loss of personal control). Gulf contends the increase is a reaction to the customer's desire for more predictability in bills. This hike has nothing to do with providing predictability to customers, and everything to do with providing predictability to investors.

5. An increase in the base rate would discourage Gulf Power and its customers in moving towards clean, renewable energy. See the power plant below. It's the Scherer coal plant in Georgia. It's one of the dirtiest in our nation. Residential customers have not gotten power from this plant in over 30 years, but Gulf has decided we need to fund it. Gulf maintains there might be a need to use energy from the Scherer plant in seven years. My oldest son will be 18 in seven years. I hope by then we have all embraced cleaner energy and are demanding that the companies that provide our power are using clean, renewable energy in an effort to protect our environment and their customers.

Karen Berry | Certified Instructor
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