

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In re: Petition for approval of FPL
SolarTogether program and tariff, by
Florida Power & Light Company.

Docket No. 20190061-EI

DATED: January 30, 2020

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**VOTE SOLAR'S
POST-HEARING BRIEF AND
STATEMENT OF ISSUES AND POSITIONS**

Pursuant to Order No. PSC-2019-0272-PCO-EI, Vote Solar files its Post-Hearing Brief.

INTRODUCTION

FPL's proposed SolarTogether Program and Tariff will constitute both the largest community solar offering in the country to date, as well as the largest low-income solar offering by any single utility. Tr. at 33, 45. SolarTogether will provide an important new pathway for Floridians seeking to power their electricity needs with local clean energy. This program is novel not just for its size; it also improves upon the traditional utility-sponsored community solar model by creating an innovative benefits-sharing arrangement between participants and the general body of ratepayers. Tr. at 33. Due to both the size and novel design of the program, the Commission is in a position to set a new standard for voluntary solar offerings in Florida and across the country.

ISSUES, POSITIONS, AND ARGUMENT

ISSUE 1: **Is FPL’s proposed SolarTogether Rider tariff an appropriate mechanism to seek approval for the construction of 1,490 MW of new solar generation facilities?**

VOTE SOLAR: *No position.*

ISSUE 2: **Does FPL’s proposed SolarTogether Rider tariff give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage to any person or locality or subject the same to any undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage in any respect, contrary to Section 366.03, Florida Statutes?**

VOTE SOLAR: *No. As amended, the SolarTogether tariff strikes a fair and reasonable balance in the allocation of the program’s costs and benefits between the general body of customers, non-subscribing customers, and subscribing customers (those who are low-income and non-low-income), in consideration of the unique contributions, needs and interests of each.*

ARGUMENT:

The Florida Legislature has determined that it is in the public interest to promote the development of renewable energy and has recognized the potential for renewable energy to increase fuel diversity, lessen dependence on natural gas, minimize fuel cost volatility, and encourage investment within Florida. Section 366.92(1), Florida Statutes. These are real benefits

flowing from the new solar resources being added to FPL's electric grid under the SolarTogether Program that will accrue to the general body of ratepayers.

There has been significant discussion in this proceeding about how the financial benefits of this Program ought to be allocated across various segments of the customer base. The SolarTogether Program and Tariff, as amended, is designed to allocate 55 percent of the projected financial benefits specifically to subscribing customers, with the other 45 percent going to all customers. Tr. at 333. Those customers who subscribe will cover over 104.5 percent of the Program base revenue requirements through a levelized Subscription Rate. *Id.* at 337. In light of the contribution that subscribing customers are making to this clean energy investment – covering *more* than the full revenue requirement over the life of the program, while only receiving about half of the projected benefits – this design is a significant improvement for the general body of customers over the typical community solar design that would isolate all of the financial benefits of the program to subscribers. In exchange for this long-term benefit, the general body of customers contributes to the subscription credit in the early years of the program offering – with the average residential monthly electric bill expected to go up no more than 47 cents (peaking in 2021, and then decreasing after that). Tr. at 415.

Further, there is a public interest need for additional clean energy capacity that lowers costs for customers suffering from high energy burdens. Importantly, this program, if approved, will constitute the largest voluntary utility-sponsored low-income solar offering in the country, which will begin to help address the severe energy burdens borne by low income ratepayers in Florida. Today, 1.4 million FPL customers live in energy poverty – spending more than a tenth of their income on basic energy services. Tr. at 589. Low-income customers face significant barriers to accessing clean energy. *Id.* This program will begin to address those barriers by

providing year-one savings for these low-income customers, with a “hold harmless” provision to ensure that a participant’s bill will never go up in any month as a result of their enrollment. FPL will also notify low-income customers at the time of enrollment of its free in-home energy check-up, which creates the opportunity for even more bill savings for enrolled low-income customers. This offering of a voluntary utility-sponsored solar offering for low-income customers is among the first such programs offered in the Southeast.

ISSUE 3: **Should the Commission allow recovery of all costs and expenses associated with FPL’s proposed SolarTogether Program in the manner proposed by FPL?**

VOTE SOLAR: *Yes.*

ISSUE 4: **Should the Commission approve FPL’s proposed SolarTogether Program and associated tariff, Rate Schedule STR, which is the same tariff attached as Attachment I to the Settlement Agreement filed October 9, 2019?**

VOTE SOLAR: *Yes. The Commission should approve the tariff attached as Attachment I to the Settlement Agreement filed October 9, 2019.*

ARGUMENT:

The Commission should approve the SolarTogether program and tariff as amended by the stipulation entered into by Florida Power & Light, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Walmart and Vote Solar, which provides a reasonable resolution of the issues raised by this filing. As amended by the stipulation, the SolarTogether program and tariff is projected to provide an

estimated \$249 million dollars in economic benefits (Tr. at 75) and commits FPL to reserve 10 percent of the Program’s residential capacity, or 37.5 MW, to low income customers (defined as those customers whose income falls at or below 200% of the federal poverty level). For these low-income customers, the subscription charge will not exceed the subscription credit in any month, providing a critically important safeguard for these consumers. Further, SolarTogether responds to customer demands for clean energy, which are real and immediate. FPL must respond to these demands if it wants to continue to provide sufficient electric service that meets the evolving needs of customers. Tr. at 677. Lastly, these solar resources will further diversify FPL’s electric system and mitigate the fuel volatility risks to all customers due to its significant reliance on natural gas. Tr. at 665.

ISSUE 5: **What adjustments, if any, should the Commission make to any affiliate transaction costs associated with FPL’s Solar Together Rider tariff?**

VOTE SOLAR: *No position.*

ISSUE 6: **Should this docket be closed?**

VOTE SOLAR: *Yes. Docket No. 20190061-EI should be closed once the Commission’s decisions on all of the issues have become final and the Commission has concluded that the docket has otherwise met the requirements for closure.*

CONCLUSION

Vote Solar respectfully requests that the Commission approve the SolarTogether Program and Tariff as modified by the October 9, 2019 Stipulation and Settlement Agreement entered into by FPL, SACE, Walmart and Vote Solar.

DATED this 30th day of January, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of Vote Solar's Post-Hearing Brief has been served by electronic mail to the following on January 30, 2020:

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