



# MARTIN COUNTY

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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**STEPHEN FRY**  
County Attorney

Florida Public Service Commission  
Division of the Commission Clerk and Administrative Services  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

Subject: Electric Infrastructure Workshop, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 in Tallahassee

Public Service Commission Officials:

Martin County has experienced three hurricanes in the past two years. As such we are well situated to provide local government insight into such events.

The Martin County Commission supports legislation and regulation that provides sound electrical utility infrastructure that meets state building code requirements regarding wind speed. Further, the Commission supports regulation to increase maintenance requirements that minimizes potential damage from landscape debris.

The wind speed requirement is especially important on barrier islands. Fallen power lines on a barrier island essentially eliminate all normal access for emergency vehicles, public roads, waste removal and most other government services. This past October, Hurricane Wilma once again knocked down both concrete and wooden power poles on the single road to south Hutchinson Island. This eliminated emergency access except by air ambulance, and it also delayed even rudimentary damage assessments for several days.

Many barrier island and isolated communities are looking to place power lines underground as a way to solve the wind damage to power lines. This includes Martin County's Hutchinson Island, along with the Town of Sewall's Point and the Town of Jupiter Island. While some communities can afford this cost, others cannot.

A unified state wide regulatory approach to this issue would serve state residents well in times of natural disaster.

Sincerely,

S/Doug Smith  
Doug Smith  
Commissioner, District 1

DS/DH/kr

Cc: Board of County Commissioners  
Duncan Ballantyne, County Administrator  
Steve Fry, County Attorney  
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