



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 Intervenor Florida Rising, I have enclosed the testimony of Elizabeth Mathis. Please file these documents in Docket No. 20210015-EI. Please contact me if there are any questions regarding this filing.

/s/ Bradley Marshall

Bradley Marshall (FL Bar No. 0098008)
bmarshall@earthjustice.org

Jordan Luebkekmann (FL Bar No. 1015603)
jluebkekmann@earthjustice.org
Earthjustice
111 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 681-0031
(850) 681-0020 (facsimile)

Christina I. Reichert (FL Bar No. 0114257)
Earthjustice
4500 Biscayne Blvd., Ste. 201
Miami, Florida 33137
(305) 440-5437
(850) 681-0020 (facsimile)

Counsel for Florida Rising

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:

<p>Thomas A. Jernigan Holly L. Buchanan Robert J. Friedman Arnold Braxton Ebony M. Payton 139 Barnes Drive, Suite 1 Tyndall Air Force Base thomas.jernigan.3@us.af.mil holly.buchanan.1@us.af.mil robert.friedman.5@us.af.mil arnold.braxton@us.af.mil ebony.payton.ctr@us.af.mil ULFSC.Tyndall@us.af.mil</p>	<p>R. Wade Litchfield John T. Burnett Russell Badders Maria Jose Moncada Ken Rubin Joel T. baker Florida Power & Light Co. 700 Universe Blvd. Juno Beach, FL 33408-0420 wade.litchfield@fpl.com john.t.burnett@fpl.com russell.badders@nexteraenergy.com maria.moncada@fpl.com ken.rubin@fpl.com joel.baker@fpl.com</p>
<p>Biana Lherisson Jennifer Crawford Shaw Stiller Suzanne Brownless Florida Public Service Commission Office of the General Counsel 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850 blheriss@psc.state.fl.us jcrawfor@psc.state.fl.us sstiller@psc.state.fl.us sbrownle@psc.state.fl.us</p>	<p>Richard Gentry Parry A. Christensen Charles Rehwinkel Anastacia Pirrello Office of Public Counsel c/o The Florida Legislature 111 W. Madison Street, Room 812 Tallahassee, FL 32399-1400 gentry.richard@leg.state.fl.us christensen.patty@leg.state.fl.us rehwinkel.charles@leg.state.fl.us pirrello.anastacia@leg.state.fl.us</p>
<p>Jon C. Moyle, Jr. Karen A. Putnal Moyle Law Firm, P.A. 118 North Gadsden St. Tallahassee, FL 32301 jmoyle@moylelaw.com kputnal@moylelaw.com mqalls@moylelaw.com</p>	<p>James W. Brew Laura Wynn Baker Joseph R. Briscar Stone Mattheis Xenopoulos & Brew, PC 1025 Thomas Jefferson St., NW Suite 800 West Washington, D.C. 20007 jbrew@smxblaw.com lwb@smxblaw.com jrb@smxblaw.com</p>

<p>Kenneth Hoffman 134 West Jefferson St. Tallahassee, FL 32301-1713 ken.hoffman@fpl.com</p>	<p>George Cavros 120 E. Oakland Park Blvd., Suite 105 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334 george@cavros-law.com</p>
<p>William C. Garner Law Office of William C. Garner, PLLC The Cleo Institute Inc. 3425 Bannerman Road Unit 105, #414 Tallahassee, FL 32312 Email: bgarner@wcglawoffice.com</p>	<p>Katie Chiles Ottenweller1 Southeast Director Vote Solar 838 Barton Woods Road Atlanta, GA 30307 Email: katie@votesolar.org Phone: 706.224.8107</p>
<p>Nathan A. Skop, Esq. 420 NW 50th Blvd. Gainesville, FL 32607 Phone: (561) 222-7455 E-mail: n_skop@hotmail.com</p>	<p>Stephanie U. Eaton Spilman Thomas & Battle, PLLC 111 Oakwood Dr., Suite 500 Winston-Salem, NC 27103 seaton@spilmanlaw.com</p>
<p>Barry A. Naum Spilman Thomas & Battle, PLLC 110 Bent Creek Blvd., Suite 101 Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 bnaum@spilmanlaw.com</p>	<p>Robert Scheffel Wright John T. LaVia, III 1300 Thomaswood Dr. Tallahassee, FL 32308 schef@gbwlegal.com jlavia@gbwlegal.com</p>

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 ELIZABETH MATHIS
ON BEHALF OF
FLORIDA RISING

June 21, 2021

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

2 **A.** Elizabeth Mathis.

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

4 **A.** Florida Rising.

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

6 **A.** I am the Central Florida Climate Justice Organizer. My primary role is as the coordinator
7 of our Disaster Resilience Initiative. This is a program that was created to help communities
8 become more resilient to disasters, such as hurricanes, which are becoming more frequent,
9 and the on-going pandemic. It is a network that builds leadership within frontline
10 communities and my role as coordinator is to provide resources and connections with the
11 community. Not only do I facilitate hurricane preparedness and response, but also things like
12 affordable and safe housing. Any issues around frequent utilities disconnections or
13 unnecessarily high utility bills also fall into my work. We have a lot of people who rely on
14 air conditioning or power due to health issues, so they are part of what we consider frontline
15 communities. I also organize around environmental injustice issues as well as legislative
16 advocacy at the local and state level. Ultimately my job is to respond to the needs of the
17 community, which often includes environmental needs. For instance, right now, we are
18 working on a campaign about predatory landlords that are not cleaning up black mold in the
19 homes of some of our community members.

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

21 **A.** It is not positive. Utility companies, and FPL especially, are taking advantage of frontline
22 communities. Not only are energy efficiency standards in Florida already awful, but they are
23 also trying to raise the rates in the middle of a pandemic. We are even seeing disconnections
24 now and we are in hurricane season. They do not have our best interest in mind and we are
25 very concerned with the negative impacts they are having on Floridians, including our

1 members in particular. We will do everything we can to protect our communities from
2 behaviors we view as predatory.

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

5 **A.** Our communities are already having a difficult time paying. Many in our lower income
6 communities are paying upwards of \$200 a month. If we are talking about raising rates even
7 further, with the pandemic and unemployment, it is completely unsustainable and likely not
8 possible in our communities. Historically, our legacy organizations have not been direct
9 relief organizations. However, especially with the pandemic and many non-profits closing
10 their doors, there is a greater demand for this type of relief and we want to get resources into
11 the community. For instance, through grants, we try to provide direct support our
12 communities so their power is not cut off. Since we were not initially built for this type of
13 relief, the internal infrastructure to support direct relief is still fairly new to us. We strive to
14 put our communities first and this rate increase will put a further strain on not just our
15 members, but on what we are able to provide them.

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

17 **A.** Yes, absolutely. Florida is ground zero for the climate crisis in the US. We are already
18 seeing immense problems as a result of climate change. Historically speaking, hurricanes
19 haven't hit Central Florida as hard or frequently. However, we are starting to see more
20 intense storms much more frequently in this area. The forecast is already projecting 13-20
21 named storms for this hurricane season so we are going to start seeing major issues. Also in
22 Central Florida, we are experiencing not only heat stress from a lack of coastal breezes in
23 addition to rising temperatures but will also be majorly affected by inland migration due to
24 sea level rise. The economy in Central Florida is based almost exclusively on tourism, so we
25 already do not have enough of a diversified economy to handle such a large migration to our

1 area.

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

5 **A.** Absolutely. It is plainly incorrect to claim that natural gas is somehow renewable or
6 “clean” (which is what the FL legislation recently claimed by adding natural gas to the
7 definition of “renewable energy” at the state level). Methane gas is worse than carbon
8 emissions as it traps heat more than carbon in our atmosphere. It is also impossible to harvest
9 methane gas without leaks. This movement toward using methane is not only bad for the
10 environment in the current moment, but will also accelerate the overall climate crisis. The
11 movement from coal was so important, but we do not want to move in the direction of
12 methane gas. All new electricity generation should be coming from renewable resources—we
13 have to stop building things that burn fossil fuels.

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

16 **A.** It is really frustrating because we don’t have an option. Florida utilities are allowed to
17 operate regional monopolies, which doesn’t give consumers a choice of which utility
18 company they prefer in any given area. This does not just affect current FPL customers but
19 also other utility customers because FPL is trying to buy up other utilities in other areas of
20 the state. It is not fair that we are putting money into bad environmental policies, but cannot
21 even have a say as to where the energy for each of our buildings comes from because of a
22 recent bill passed by the FL legislature that was widely supported by utility companies.
23 Divestment is a tactic we use in organizing, but here it is tough because we are still paying
24 into this machine that we cannot get away from. Honestly, it’s inappropriate and damaging,
25 especially when you look at the recent bill passed by the Florida Legislature that I mentioned

1 above that would prohibit local municipal governments from banning any specific type of
2 energy source, effectively ending 100% renewable energy goals for areas that don't have
3 municipal utility companies.

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

5 **A.** We work in Black, brown, and indigenous communities to advance both social and
6 political power. We work in frontline communities to empower leadership and take the
7 direction of these communities.

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

10 **A.** We are advocating on behalf of communities as well as providing a space for our
11 community members to tell their stories. This proceeding allows our members to engage on a
12 statewide level and be heard in Tallahassee where many of FPL's decisions are actually
13 made, which is so powerful.

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

16 **A.** Yes. I know this because a huge bulk of our members reside in FPL's territory, since FPL
17 is the provider for a large portion of the state, and we also have the information from our
18 outreach work to the communities we represent. As I have stated, many of our members have
19 low incomes and high energy burdens already, and cannot afford for their electricity rates to
20 jump up by 20%.

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

23 **A.** The subject matter affects vulnerable communities, so it is within our scope. As an
24 organization, we are the bridge between high-level policy and our communities, so this
25 proceeding is very much within our scope.

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

3 **A.** We want to be able to keep our members from paying more than they can afford.
4 Generational wealth is a function of white privilege so many of our members are unable to
5 pay several hundred dollars every month for electric bills in addition to what they already
6 pay.

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

8 **A.** We have already engaged with Duke Energy over a similar issue since I have been at
9 Florida Rising. I have only been with the organization since October so I cannot speak to
10 anything specifically before I arrived, but I do know we engaged with that kind of work
11 before.

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

13 **A.** We have engaged for the same reasons that we engage in this FPL case. We do not want
14 any raised rates until energy efficiency standards are updated. Our lowest income families
15 cannot afford energy efficient appliances so they will end up paying exponentially more than
16 others. We are also very concerned about climate change, and we need all utilities to stop
17 building new fossil fuel infrastructure. Frankly, FPL needs to read the room. We are still in a
18 pandemic and there has to be recognition of what is going on and the severe harm this rate
19 increase could cause. We are also in a worsening climate crisis, and allowing FPL to keep
20 recovering money for new dirty energy infrastructure sends the wrong message.

21

22

23

24

25