

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

DOCKET NO. 20210015-EI

Petition for rate increase
by Florida Power & Light
Company.

_____ /

PROCEEDINGS: SERVICE HEARING

COMMISSIONERS
PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Tuesday, June 22, 2021

TIME: Commenced: 6:00 p.m.
Concluded: 7:49 p.m.

PLACE: Betty Easley Conference Center
Room 148
4075 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, Florida

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter

PREMIER REPORTING
112 W. 5TH AVENUE
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA
(850) 894-0828

1 APPEARANCES:

2 WADE LITCHFIELD, JOHN BURNETT, MARIA MONCADA
3 ESQUIRES, Florida Power & Light Company, 700 Universe
4 Boulevard, Juno Beach, Florida 33408; KENNETH A.
5 HOFFMAN, ESQUIRE, 134 W. Jefferson Street, Tallahassee,
6 Florida 32301; RUSSELL A. BADDERS, ESQUIRE, Gulf Power
7 Company, One Energy Place, Bin 100, Pensacola, Florida,
8 32520, appearing on behalf of Florida Power & Light
9 Company (FPL).

10 BRADLEY MARSHALL and JORDAN LUEBKEMANN,
11 ESQUIRES, Earthjustice, 111 S. Martin Luther King Jr.
12 Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32301; CHRISTINA I.
13 REICHERT, ESQUIRE, Earthjustice, 4500 Biscayne
14 Boulevard, Suite 201, Miami, Florida 33137, appearing on
15 behalf of Florida Rising, Inc., League of Latin American
16 Citizens of Florida, and Environmental Confederation of
17 Southwest Florida.

18 THOMAS JERNIGAN, MAJOR HOLLY BUCHANAN, CAPTAIN
19 ROBERT FRIEDMAN, SERGEANT ARNOLD BRAXTON, EBONY PAYTON
20 and SCOTT KIRK, Federal Executive Agencies, 139 Barnes
21 Drive, Suite 1, Tyndall AFB, Florida 32403; appearing on
22 behalf of the Federal Executive Agencies.

23

24

25

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 JON C. MOYLE, JR. and KAREN A. PUTNAL,
3 ESQUIRES, Moyle Law Firm, 118 North Gadsden Street,
4 Tallahassee, FL 32301; appearing on behalf of Florida
5 Industrial Users Group (FIPUG).

6 JAMES W. BREW and LAURA W. BAKER, Stone Law
7 Firm, 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street NW, Suite 800 West
8 Washington, DC 20007; appearing on behalf of Florida
9 Retail Federation (FRF).

10 WILLIAM C. GARNER, ESQUIRE, Law Office of
11 William C. Garner, 3425 Bannerman Road Unit 105, #414,
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32312, appearing on behalf of The
13 CLEO Institute Inc.

14 GEORGE CAVROS, ESQUIRE, 120 E. Oakland Park
15 Boulevard, Suite 105, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33334;
16 appearing on behalf of Southern Alliance for Clean
17 Energy (SACE).

18 KATIE CHILES OTTENWELLER, ESQUIRE, 838 Barton
19 Woods Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30307, appearing on behalf
20 of Vote Solar.

21

22

23

24

25

1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; CHARLES
3 REHWINKEL, DEPUTY PUBLIC COUNSEL; PATRICIA A.
4 CHRISTENSEN and ANASTACIA PIRRELLO, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF
5 PUBLIC COUNSEL, c/o The Florida Legislature, 111 West
6 Madison Street, Room 812, Tallahassee, Florida
7 32399-1400, appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the
8 State of Florida (OPC.).

9 SUZANNE BROWNLESS, BIANCA LHERISSON, SHAW
10 STILLER and JENNIFER CRAWFORD, ESQUIRES, FPSC General
11 Counsel's Office, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard,
12 Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850, appearing on behalf of
13 the Florida Public Service Commission (Staff).

14 KEITH HETRICK, GENERAL COUNSEL; MARY ANNE
15 HELTON, DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL, Florida Public Service
16 Commission, 2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard, Tallahassee,
17 Florida 32399-0850, Advisor to the Florida Public
18 Service Commission.

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X

	PAGE
WITNESS:	
PK KAPUR	25
NICHOLAS FISHER	27
CANDACE LOPES	29
TAMASINE HOUSTON	32
WILLIAM QUINLAN	34
ROBERT RUIZ	37
CHARLES PAGE	39
JEANNA MERRIFIELD	42
ALYSSA DELGADO	43
BETH RAPPAPORT	47
RYAN SHEDD	49
KEITH KOENIG	51
SUSAN CLARK	53
DARRELL SEARCY	55
LAYNE PAZZAGLIA	56
ROCK ABOUJOUDE	58
ERIK OFENGAND	61
SIMON GOTERA	62
CHARLES CAULKINS	64
SHANE LEMAR	67
OLIVER TORRES	69
ALEXANDER LORENZO	72
DALE TRENT	74
DAVID WHELPLEY	75
DENNIS JOHNSON	78
SALESIA SMITH-GORDON	79
MARGO MILLER	82
DENNIS BATTISTELLA	85
KEVIN MORENZA	88

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Good evening, I
3 would like to welcome you all to this customer
4 service hearing in the Florida Power & Light
5 Company and Gulf Power rate case. Today's service
6 hearing is an important part of the rate case
7 process and is dedicated to hearing from you, the
8 customers.

9 My name is Gary Clark, and I have the
10 privilege of serving as the Chairman of the Florida
11 Public Service Commission. All of our
12 Commissioners are here and on the line today.

13 We will have a few specific instructions as to
14 how we are going to handle these proceedings in
15 just a few minutes, but before we do that, I am
16 going to ask staff, if they would, to please read
17 the notice.

18 MR. STILLER: By notice issued on June 3rd,
19 2021, this time and place has been set for a
20 customer service hearing in Docket No. 20210015-EI.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
22 Stiller.

23 I would like to note before we take
24 appearances that we do have Ms. Jackie Guldris on
25 the line with us. She is our Spanish interpreter

1 and will be doing interpretation if anyone needs
2 that service, we do have it available. This is a
3 designated Spanish speaking hearing, so we have
4 that available and ready.

5 At this time, we will take appearances,
6 beginning with FPL.

7 MS. BARNES: Good evening. I am Monica
8 Barnes, appearing on behalf of Florida Power &
9 Light Company. I would also like to enter an
10 appearance for Russell Badders and Wade Litchfield.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Ms. Barnes.
12 OPC.

13 MS. PIRRELLO: Anastacia Pirrello for the
14 Public Counsel's office. I would also like to
15 enter an appearance Richard Gentry, Charles
16 Rehwinkel and --

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Ms. Pirrello, I
18 think we have got all of yours there. We are
19 having a little bit of difficulty understanding
20 you, but I think we got all of them, oaky.

21 All right. Court reporter. There she is.
22 She didn't hear it.

23 Ms. Pirrello, will you please list your
24 appearances again for me?

25 MS. PIRRELLO: Of course, Mr. Chairman.

1 Anastacia Pirrello, Richard Gentry, Charles
2 Rehwinkel and Patricia Christensen.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Very good. We could hear you
4 clear that time. Perfect. Thank you.

5 Next Florida Rising.

6 MR. LUEBKEMANN: Good evening, Mr. Chair.
7 Jordan Luebkekmann for Florida Rising. I would also
8 like to enter an appearance for my colleague
9 Christina Reichert, and that's for LULAC and ECOSWF
10 as well.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
12 much.

13 Florida Executive Agencies.

14 FIPUG.

15 SACE.

16 FRF.

17 Vote Solar.

18 MS. OTTENWELLER: Good evening, Mr. Chairman.
19 This is Katie Chiles Ottenweller with Vote Solar,
20 and I would also like to enter an appearance for
21 Bill Garner with the CLEO Institute.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you, Ms.
23 Ottenweller.

24 Walmart.

25 Larsons.

1 MR. SKOP: Yes. Good evening Mr. -- excuse
2 me, good evening, Mr. Chairman. Nathan Skop
3 entering an appearance on behalf of Daniel --

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Make sure my
5 court reporter got that. You broke up on us in the
6 beginning there. I think you are clear now.

7 MR. SKOP: Yes, I am sorry, Mr. Chair, let me
8 repeat that.

9 Good evening, Mr. Chairman, Nathan Skop,
10 entering an appearance on behalf of had Daniel and
11 Alexandria Larson.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Very good. Thank you very
13 much, Mr. Skop.

14 FAIR.

15 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
16 evening.

17 Robert Scheffel Wright on behalf of Floridians
18 Against Increased Rates, Incorporated. I would
19 also like to enter an appearance for my law partner
20 John Thomas LaVia, III.

21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Wright.
23 Counsel, staff.

24 MR. STILLER: Shaw Stiller for PSC Staff. I
25 would also like to enter an appearance for Bianca

1 Lherisson and Suzanne Brownless.

2 MS. HELTON: And Mary Anne Helton is here as
3 your Advisor. I would also like to enter an
4 appearance for your general counsel, Keith Hetrick.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you
6 counsel. Did we get everyone?

7 All right. Let me begin by thanking each of
8 you for taking time out of your schedule to call in
9 to this customer service hearing this afternoon.
10 We appreciate your interest in the petition that's
11 been filed by Florida Power & Light and Gulf Power
12 Company.

13 As I mentioned, this hearing is designed so
14 that we can hear directly from you, the customer.
15 This is your opportunity to express your thoughts,
16 your concerns and your comments related to the
17 utility's request.

18 In August, there will be a technical hearing
19 where the Commission will take in the substance and
20 the evidence of this case.

21 If you would like to speak with an FPL Gulf
22 Power representative, a representative can be
23 reached by calling (833)407-2007 from 8:00 a.m. to
24 5:00 p.m., and during this hearing this evening.

25 Curt Mouring from our Accounting & Finance

1 Division is the PSC's representative for this
2 docket and can be reached by emailing
3 cmouring@psc.state.fl.us, or calling (850)413-6427.

4 Commission technical staff are also on the
5 line today.

6 This is an official hearing, it will be
7 transcribed and become part of our official record.
8 As such, I will swear you in over the phone before
9 you share your comments if you have not already
10 been sworn in. If you checked the appropriate box
11 on the website when you were signing up, we will
12 consider you to be sworn in. Just a reminder that
13 all testimony is given under oath.

14 We note that your comments will be subject to
15 cross-examination. That is, you may be asked
16 questions by either the parties or by one of the
17 commissioners.

18 For those that are calling in, we ask that you
19 please keep your phone on mute at all times. We
20 also ask that you do not use the speakerphone
21 function. Please speak directly into your phone,
22 or use a headset. If you are disconnected, please
23 call back in as soon as possible.

24 A couple of minor housekeeping notes.

25 Each participant will be given three minutes

1 to speak. At the three-minute mark, we will tone a
2 bell. It's my understanding that some folks cannot
3 hear this bell because they are actually speaking
4 into their phone at the time. We do have a bell we
5 will ring at three minutes. We will ring another
6 one at 3:15. If you are still in the middle of
7 your testimony, I will kind of break in and give
8 you a two-second warning to wrap it up and let's
9 move on.

10 I apologize in advance if this seems to be
11 abrupt, but we have a lot of customers that want to
12 testify. We are going to try to get through about
13 50 customer tonight, and if the person is last on
14 the list, they are going to be on hold a long, long
15 time before they get to speak. So we want to be
16 respectful of their time as well, and try to get to
17 everyone as quickly as we can.

18 If you hear comments that are the same that
19 you were going to make, please feel free to just
20 echo those comments, and we will move on and try
21 get to everybody in an expeditious manner as
22 possible.

23 Now, before we begin tonight, we are going to
24 allow FPL to make an opening statement. OPC will
25 be given an opportunity to make an opening

1 statement. Then any of the parties who wish to do
2 so also will have three minutes to make a
3 statement.

4 I would encourage our parties to make your
5 statements brief so we can get on to what we are
6 here for, and that's for our customers.

7 We will begin with FPL. You are recognized.

8 MS. BARNES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 Christopher Chapel, Vice-President of Customer
10 Service, will provide opening statements on behalf
11 of FPL, followed by brief remarks in Spanish by
12 Rosa Prieto.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We can't hear you, Mr.
14 Chapel. Let's hold up one second. Unmute. Try
15 again.

16 MR. CHAPEL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and
17 Commissioners. And thank you to all of our
18 customers who have taken the time to be with us
19 today.

20 My name is Christopher Chapel, and I am the
21 Vice-President of Customer Service for FPL.

22 FPL is a regulated energy company. This means
23 the Public Service Commission oversees our rates
24 and operations to ensure we deliver safe and
25 reliable service at fair prices. We are here this

1 evening because we are asking for new base rates
2 beginning in 2022.

3 Let me begin by saying that I am proud to be
4 part of the team that provides you with America's
5 best energy value; electricity that's not just
6 clean and reliable, but also affordable. That
7 doesn't mean that we can't be better, which is why
8 your feedback is so important to us.

9 Fundamentally, our mission is to provide you
10 with excellent service at affordable rates. Your
11 electricity is cleaner and more reliable than ever.
12 It's also affordable. The rates you pay are well
13 below the national average. Our typical
14 residential customer bill is lower today than it
15 was 15 years ago. This is a result of FPL's
16 consistent and deliberate effort to continuously
17 improve upon our performance in the value we
18 provide our customers. It's a purposeful and never
19 ending commitment to be the best utility possible,
20 and this is at the heart of our rate request. We
21 are standing by our proven track record in
22 promising an even better tomorrow, a more resilient
23 and sustainable energy future that all of us can
24 depend on.

25 Our smart investments have increased

1 generation efficiency and dramatically improved
2 reliability. In fact, we have been the most
3 reliable utility in Florida for the last 15 years,
4 and we have improved storm preparedness and
5 mobilization. As a result, we have dramatically
6 improved our restoration times, but it's been five
7 years since our last rate request.

8 Florida is now the country's third largest
9 state and the world's 17th largest economy. FPL
10 has grown too. We now serve more than 11 million
11 Floridians. And though we've invested billions of
12 dollars every year to support Florida's growth, and
13 to continuously improve your service, many of these
14 investments are not included in current rates. So
15 we've asked the PSC to approve a plan that would
16 phase in new rates starting in 2022.

17 Please keep in mind that the proposed increase
18 is spread across millions of customers in over a
19 four-year period. So even with the proposed rate
20 increase, typical residential bills will continue
21 to remain well below the national average. And
22 importantly, the plan will allow us to continue to
23 make proven investments in infrastructure, clean
24 energy and technologies that benefit our customers
25 and our growing state.

1 While we work hard every day to keep bills
2 low, we also recognize that some of our customers
3 face challenges. To this end, we partner with
4 dozens of assistance agencies to distribute LIHEAP
5 and Care to Share funding who help customers who
6 are struggling to pay their bills. And during the
7 COVID pandemic, we received approval from the PSC
8 to create a number of unique programs that provided
9 approximately \$75 million in assistance to our
10 customers.

11 As we have, and always will, we are here to
12 support customers. In fact, we have employees
13 available right now to help customers. As the
14 Chairman mentioned, you can contact us at
15 (833)407-2007.

16 In closing, we are committed to serving you
17 today while always looking over the horizon so we
18 are ready to meet your energy needs tomorrow. We
19 are looking forward to hearing from you. We want
20 to hear what we do well. To that end, we've asked
21 customers who have said they value our service to
22 share their thoughts today. But more importantly,
23 we want to know where we can improve. So thank you
24 for your participation, and thank you as ever for
25 the opportunity to serve you.

1 I would now like to turn it over to Rosie
2 Prieto, Senior Director of our customer care team
3 to welcome our Spanish speaking customers.

4 (Whereupon, Ms. Rosie Prieto made introductory
5 remarks in Spanish.)

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
7 much.

8 OPC.

9 MS. PIRRELLO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Good evening, everyone. My name is Anastacia
11 Pirrello, and I represent the Office of Public
12 Counsel.

13 On behalf of Public Counsel, Richard Gentry, I
14 would like to thank you all for joining us this
15 evening.

16 Our office is tasked with representing all of
17 you, the customers of FPL, and our accountants and
18 attorneys have been evaluating their petition, and
19 we have also engaged several experts to evaluate it
20 as well. We will continue to investigate, and we
21 are interested in hearing the things that you have
22 to share with us tonight. So thank you for coming,
23 and we would like to hear anything that you have to
24 say about the positives or negatives of your
25 service.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
3 Pirrello.

4 Are there any other parties that would like to
5 speak?

6 MR. SKOP: Yes, Mr. Chairman, at the
7 appropriate time, the Larsons would like to make a
8 brief statement.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Mr. Skop, you are
10 recognized.

11 MR. SKOP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Good evening. My name is Nathan Skop. As an
13 attorney, it is my privilege to represent the
14 Larsons in the FPL rate case. The Larsons are
15 residential customers living in Palm Beach County.

16 The FPL rate case before the Public Service
17 Commission represents the largest electric rate
18 increase in Florida's history. FPL has the burden
19 to demonstrate that their request is fair, just and
20 reasonable.

21 FPL should be allowed to recover the prudent
22 additions made to rate base since the last rate
23 request and settlement. It is important to
24 understand, however, that FPL claims about having
25 lower rates than other electric utilities does not

1 provide a legal basis for the Florida Public
2 Service Commission to increase FPL base rates.

3 The Larsons oppose the FPL request because
4 evidence will demonstrate that FPL's request is
5 well in excess of what FPL needs to continue to
6 provide reliable service to FPL customers while
7 remaining financially healthy.

8 Return on equity is one of many hotly
9 contested issues in this FPL rate case. In the
10 current rate case, FPL's requested mid point ROE of
11 11.5 percent. FPL has a very strong balance sheet
12 and is financially healthy.

13 In sharp contrast to the FPL request, on
14 May 4th, the Florida Public Service Commission
15 approved the Duke rate case settlement with a mid
16 point return on equity of 9.85 percent. Basically
17 that set a new benchmark for what is an appropriate
18 fair, just and reasonable ROE for a regulated
19 utility within the state of Florida.

20 With a much stronger balance sheet than Duke,
21 it is difficult to understand can why FPL can
22 justify 165 basis points to a mid point ROE within
23 its request.

24 Finally, the Larsons are deeply concerned
25 about media reports about the influence that the

1 investor-owned utilities, such as FPL, are alleged
2 to have over the Florida Public Service Commission
3 and the Florida Legislature.

4 In closing, we hope that everyone will see the
5 merits of avoiding the time and expense of the
6 fully litigated rate case that would have to come
7 before the Commission for a decision and enter into
8 a fair and reasonable decision that would benefit
9 Florida consumers and FPL alike.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much.

12 Ms. Ottenweller.

13 MS. OTTENWELLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Good afternoon. I am here on behalf of the
15 CLEO Institute and Vote Solar, two nonprofit
16 organizations that are working towards an
17 affordable, clean, equitable and resilient energy
18 system that works for all Floridians, especially
19 those who are most vulnerable.

20 I want to thank everyone for calling in and we
21 really look forward to hearing your input.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
23 Ottenweller.

24 Florida Rising.

25 MR. LUEBKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 (Spanish introduction.)

2 Good evening, everyone, my name is Jordan
3 Leubkemann, along with my colleagues Bradley
4 Marshall and Christina Reichert, have the great
5 privilege of Florida Rising, the League of Latin --
6 League of United Latin American Citizens of Florida
7 and the Environmental Confederation of Southwest
8 Florida in this proceeding.

9 These organizations have missions spanning
10 environmental conservation, economic and civil
11 rights, and environmental and climate justice. All
12 three are in this case to oppose FPL's attempts to
13 raise rates by 20 percent.

14 This rate hike would allow FPL to increase
15 their profits and pay for unneeded fossil fuel gas
16 plants, among other unnecessary expenses.

17 As the evidence will show, FPL's proposed rate
18 increase and how FPL plans to spend that extra
19 money is bad for ratepayers, bad for low-income
20 communities and communities of color and bad for
21 the environment. For these reasons, we will be
22 asking that FPL's rate request be rejected.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, sir.

25 Mr. Wright.

1 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
2 evening to you, Commissioners, and to all the
3 customers who are participating tonight.

4 My name is Robert Scheffel Wright. I go by
5 Schef. I was born in Miami, and I have work on
6 energy matters here in Florida for more than 40
7 years, including service in Governor Bob Graham's
8 energy office and seven years of service on a
9 Public Service Commission staff before I became an
10 attorney.

11 This evening, I have the privilege of
12 representing Floridians Against Increased Rates,
13 Incorporated. We call it FAIR. FAIR is a Florida
14 nonprofit corporation that exists to advocate by
15 all lawful means for electric rates that are as low
16 as possible, while ensuring that the utility, FPL
17 in this case, have sufficient funds and resources
18 to maintain safe and reliable service. FAIR has
19 intervened in this case on behalf of its members
20 who are FPL customers.

21 On behalf of FAIR, I thank all of you
22 customers for participating in this hearing this
23 evening.

24 I want to be clear about this point from the
25 outset. From the customers' perspective, FAIR

1 wants a healthy FPL, but our position is simply
2 that FPL should have enough money, not too much.
3 It is FPL's duty and responsibility, it is FPL's
4 job to provide safe and reliable service at the
5 lowest possible cost.

6 The evidence in this case will show that FPL's
7 request, which, by the way, is by far the largest
8 request in history, in the history of Florida,
9 anyway, would give it way more money than it needs
10 do it's job. Putting it politely, FPL's request is
11 unreasonable and unfair.

12 The unfairness of FPL's request is that FPL
13 does not need the extra \$1.1 billion of your money
14 that it wants next year, and they don't need all of
15 what they've asked for in the following year. Even
16 in they got no increase at all next year, 2022, FPL
17 could cover all of its projected expenses,
18 including interest, make all of their projected
19 investments, including they've already got in their
20 rate base, and still have well over \$2 billion in
21 profits left over. It's even worse than that.

22 Based on FPL's demonstrated practices over at
23 least the past four years, they also want to take
24 surplus value called the depreciation reserve
25 surplus that your payments will create, probably on

1 the order of another billion and a half dollars,
2 and use that to make even more money, such that
3 four years from now they will have used up the
4 value you create to earn even more, and you will be
5 left with nothing of the value you paid for, and
6 FPL will, in the meantime, charge you higher rates
7 going forward.

8 FAIR and our witnesses will fight to prevent
9 FPL from getting any of your money that they don't
10 need, and prevent them from using up value that you
11 create to pad their profits even more.

12 Tell the Commissioners what you think. Thank
13 you for being here tonight, and thank you for your
14 attention.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
16 Wright.

17 Anyone else?

18 All right. We will get into the customer
19 testimony time.

20 I would just like to remind you, we will be
21 giving each customer three minutes to speak this
22 evening. We do have a very long list to go
23 through, so we are going to try to move through as
24 expeditiously as possible.

25 When you come on the line, please give your

1 name and state whether or not you are a customer of
2 Florida Power & Light or of Gulf Power Company.

3 I will do these in blocks of three. I will
4 try to give you some heads-up so that you will know
5 that you are coming up to speak so that you can be
6 ready to come off mute and take the line.

7 The first three speakers are PK Kapur,
8 Nicholas Fisher, Candace Lopes.

9 We will begin with Mr. Kapur. Are you on the
10 line, sir?

11 MR. KAPUR: Good evening, Mr. Chairman. Can
12 you hear me?

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, we need to swear you in,
14 Mr. Kapur.

15 (Whereupon, PK Kapur was sworn by Chairman
16 Clark.)

17 MR. KAPUR: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized for three
19 minutes, sir.

20 MR. KAPUR: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and the
21 Commission.

22 Yes, I do support the tariff increase. The
23 most important thing which I have noticed for many
24 years that they have the best restoration service.
25 As you all know, we live in a hurricane prone area

1 and, you know, the last, like, two hits in the last
2 five to six years, like, right now I am talking to
3 you on the phone, there is a big storm passing by
4 our county, again, if anybody is watching the
5 weather.

6 For any business to survive, the most
7 important thing is power, which I mean electric
8 power, and businesses can take a big loss if they
9 do not have power. They have -- (inaudible) -- and
10 we want to make sure that, you know, the
11 infrastructure needs are well funded and, you know,
12 the more days we are without power, you know, it's
13 not viable economically for any business to
14 sustain.

15 They have invested a good amount of money in
16 strengthening the power poles and the lines for
17 future storms. I have seen that in the last, I
18 will say, a decade. And they are doing an
19 incredible job of that.

20 The other thing I have noticed, you know, they
21 are taking a major step towards in producing clean
22 energy, which we have seen all across the state of
23 Florida. I just saw a social media post, they've
24 got 40 solar plants going on across the state of
25 Florida, and, you know, that's -- that's not cheap

1 at all.

2 So they also have electric cars charging
3 systems being installed at various locations to
4 charge electric vehicles. And as we all know, most
5 of the new automobile companies are coming with
6 electric vehicle, and we all need a lot more of
7 those charging stations.

8 Ending up, I want to say that they have done
9 an incredible job in the community getting involved
10 with a lot of nonprofit organizations and made
11 Space Coast in Florida a good place to work.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much,
14 Mr. Kapur.

15 Next up, Nicholas Fisher.

16 MR. FISHER: Hi, Mr. Chairman, can you hear
17 me?

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We can hear you loud and
19 clear.

20 MR. FISHER: So I just want to give a little
21 background about myself and my experience I have
22 had so far in Florida Power & Light.

23 So I moved down here from Michigan about three
24 years ago. I am in my twenties, and when I moved
25 here three years ago, I moved into an apartment,

1 and I was just kind of surprised actually about how
2 easy it was to get my electrical bill on-line and
3 to look at my power usage and all that very easily,
4 and using the Florida Power & Light app is very
5 easy to do as well.

6 Since I have lived in Florida, I have become a
7 homeowner as well. And getting the power set up in
8 my house and, again, tracking all of my energy
9 usage, making sure that I am not using too much, it
10 is it was very simple using the website and the app
11 as well.

12 And one more thing that I found that Florida
13 Power & Light does well is they are very good at
14 managing storms based off of what I have seen. At
15 least in Michigan, sometimes we would have big
16 snowstorms and it put out the power for, you know,
17 three or four days. Since I have been living in
18 Florida, I have only had my power out a maximum of
19 one hour.

20 And I know one of my friends' mom actually had
21 her power go out, and she was able to track -- she
22 was using the FPL app -- when her power might come
23 back on, when other people's power is coming back
24 on, and I just found that to be a very fascinating
25 and good feature. And I just look forward to

1 seeing what FPL has to innovate coming up.

2 So that's all I have got to say.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
4 much, Mr. Fisher.

5 Anyone have any questions for Mr. Fisher?

6 All right. Seeing none.

7 Just a moment to confer with my fellow
8 Commissioners. Does everyone have the updated list
9 that's not in alphabetical order? Do you have one
10 that's not the correct version? You do, okay,
11 great. I just want to make sure everybody has one.
12 Thank you. Sorry about the confusion there.

13 All right. Next up Candace Lopes.

14 MS. LOPES: Good evening, Commissioner. Can
15 you hear me?

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We can hear you. You are
17 recognized.

18 MS. LOPES: My name is Candace Lopes, and I
19 reside in Palm City, Florida, with my husband.

20 My story is more on a personal note, as well
21 as community.

22 My husband and I bought our house in Palm City
23 approximately two-and-a-half years ago and we had
24 some concern about the main line going from the
25 pole to our hose and we had called, and they came

1 out. And the gentleman said, okay, no problem, we
2 will send somebody out tomorrow. Well, they sent
3 someone out, and the gentleman that came out said,
4 ma'am, we have a lot more issues here for you to
5 discuss, and he said, thank God you called us,
6 because your house potentially could have burned
7 down.

8 So -- I mean, they moved within minutes, and
9 they took care of everything that needed to be
10 taken care of. Transformers were changed. Wires
11 were changed. I mean, we are talking speed of
12 lightning here that they moved on us. And it was
13 just a true blessing.

14 We had no idea whatsoever. I mean, the
15 customer service was by far -- I mean, this is, you
16 know, we could have lost our house, and that, in
17 and of itself -- I mean, they could have given us
18 the runaround. As you know, we've all had the
19 runaround by many other companies before in
20 everything in our lives, and there was no questions
21 asked. There was no hesitation whatsoever. They
22 just did what they had to do. They did it
23 immediately, with expertise, professionalism,
24 kindness, courtesy, concern for us and our
25 well-being. And we don't come across that too

1 often.

2 You know, we moved here from Los Angeles. And
3 if you want to talk about high, you know, power
4 rates we -- we can tell you about high electric
5 rates, that's for sure. And we are truly blessed,
6 and we can't thank FPL enough every day that we
7 wake up safe and sound in our home.

8 You know, I own a business in this community,
9 and they are always there to lend a hand whenever
10 anybody needs anything. You know, I just can't say
11 enough good about the company in and of itself and
12 its workers from top to bottom, literally from top
13 to bottom.

14 So I do not have a problem as a business
15 owner, nor as a resident, with the rate increase
16 across the board. I am quite happy with their
17 service, and more than happy with the increase
18 spread out as they are coming forth with.

19 So thank you so much for the opportunity, and
20 have a good evening.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much as well,
22 Ms. Lopes.

23 I got that question twice.

24 Any questions for Ms. Lopes?

25 All right. Next up, Tamasine Houston,

1 followed by Robert Ruiz, William Quinlan.

2 Tamasine Houston.

3 MS. HOUSTON: Good evening, Mr. Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Good evening.

5 MS. HOUSTON: It's actually pronounced Houston
6 even though spelled Houston.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay.

8 MS. HOUSTON: I am a Brevard County resident
9 since 1988. I currently live on Merritt Island,
10 and FPL is a service provider for both my home and
11 my place of business.

12 I would first like to reiterate that the
13 people that spoke before, I literally -- every item
14 that they mentioned were on my list to reiterate,
15 so we can -- we can kind of bypass that.

16 I do support FPL. I do think that they go
17 above and beyond what their job descriptions are
18 and what the customer service aspect entails. I
19 will give you a personal story.

20 My mother moved here a couple years ago, and
21 she is on oxygen 100 percent. And she bought a
22 home, and she set herself up on a notification
23 process from FPL. When she sold that home and she
24 moved to a new residence, she failed to fill out
25 the proper paperwork. FPL took the initiative to

1 follow up with her that she needed to do it. When
2 she did not follow through, they contacted me.

3 So they went the extra mile to make sure that
4 their customers are safe, that everything is,
5 excuse me, is done the way that it needs to be
6 done. And in my book, customer service, they
7 exceed the customer service level.

8 I do not oppose the rate increase. I think
9 that they have shown through their -- their work
10 ethic, through -- you constantly see their trucks
11 on the road. You know that they are trying to keep
12 us up-to-date. They are working through clean
13 energy initiatives. They are doing a lot of things
14 to support the community, and I think that's very,
15 very important. And that's it.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
17 much.

18 Anyone have any questions for Ms. Houston?
19 All right next up Robert Ruiz. Robert Ruiz.
20 All right. Next is William Quinlan.

21 MR. QUINLAN: Hello, can you hear me?

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Is that you, Mr. Quinlan?

23 MR. QUINLAN: Yes, Mr. Quinlan speaking.

24 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are
25 recognized, sir.

1 MR. QUINLAN: Thank you so much.

2 My name is William Quinlan. I am 26 years
3 old, and I am an FPL customer in Miami Beach, and I
4 love electricity regulation, so I was doing a deep
5 dive on the docket that FPL is proposing.

6 Now, there are some things in here that I
7 like. I think it's nice that FPL wants to build
8 more solar, maybe their transmission lines.

9 There are some things that I -- I don't know
10 that I necessarily think are very good. I think
11 some critiques of their return on equity are
12 probably too high, but I could sleep at night if
13 FPL earns a good profit doing a good job. The one
14 thing that I am absolutely adamantly opposed to
15 that I cannot stomach is their expansion of the
16 rate base to cover brand new gas units and gas
17 infrastructure like their expecting at Plant Crist
18 and at Dania Beach. I want to just -- (inaudible)
19 -- through the implications of what they are trying
20 to say with these plans.

21 They are proposing them, based on their
22 amortization schedules, to be used for a 50-year
23 life cycle, right? At which time you think about
24 Florida in 2070, the sea levels will have risen two
25 to four feet. And they are proposing this knowing

1 full well, as the members of this Commission do,
2 that we cannot run natural gas units that far in
3 the future.

4 The IEA said last month that we cannot have
5 any fossil plants operating electricity past 2040,
6 and President Biden is working with Congress and --
7 (inaudible) -- for 2035 phase-out in America. So
8 what does FPL plan to do with the expected life
9 cycle of these units that they want to build now
10 after that time?

11 One, they could seek future cost recovery,
12 just as they are trying to do for the coal units
13 they are retiring now. And we can just hope that
14 the PSCs in the future that might approve them
15 won't curse you out for your shortsightedness if
16 you were to approve them today.

17 Or two, they are proposing that they will use
18 green hydrogen to fuel them, right, based on the
19 energy that we generated from otherwise curtailed
20 solar power.

21 Now, don't get me wrong, I like green
22 hydrogen. I imagine that NextEra Energy might be
23 able to make a pretty fortune supplying it to
24 decarbonized sectors like aviation and shipping.
25 But for electricity, it requires you to make four

1 assumptions.

2 One, that FPL is going to ramp up their solar
3 capacity even though it's only in the single digits
4 today's.

5 Two, that Florida won't be subject to an RTO,
6 or a clean electricity standard, or any other
7 regulatory scheme that mandates prioritization of
8 solar ahead of gas.

9 Three, importantly, that the technology and
10 market for green hydrogen, which is a still
11 unproven resource, will mature enough to supply the
12 gas turbines across a really big state in a very
13 short timeframe.

14 And four, most importantly, that all of this
15 happens at a lower price than just building
16 batteries for solar power.

17 This is absolutely ludicrous. It's hardly
18 just. It's surely unreasonable. I encourage
19 NextEra to do R&D, and to do demonstration projects
20 in green hydrogen. But that cannot be the basis on
21 which the taxpayers in this state fund future
22 expansion of gas infrastructure, which locks in
23 life cycles that we cannot afford, right?

24 Across the southeast, we are seeing pushback
25 against IOUs that are building out gas

1 infrastructure. The South Carolina PSC just
2 rejected Duke's integrated resource proposal. The
3 Attorney General of North Carolina is opposing
4 Duke's similar comments --

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank -- thank
6 you very much, Mr. Quinlan.

7 Anybody have any questions for Mr. Quinlan?
8 All right. Thank you for your testimony.
9 Susan Clark.

10 MR. QUINLAN: Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Susan Clark.

12 All right. Next is Dale Trent.

13 MR. RUIZ: Hello, Mr. Chairman.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes.

15 MR. RUIZ: Yeah, this is Robert Ruiz. I had
16 technical issues trying to get in and finally came
17 in.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: My apologies, Mr. Ruiz. You
19 are recognized for three minutes.

20 MR. RUIZ: No problem.

21 Yes, I have been building in Dade County for
22 over 20 years. We do large-scale residential
23 housing, custom homes, warehousing, and so forth.
24 My experience with FPL, besides being a customer,
25 is on the business side. In all situations that we

1 encounter them, on the job sites, FPL is pretty
2 much one of the few people we can rely on to do
3 exactly what they are supposed to do. They are
4 timely. They do the job correctly. They are quick
5 to respond. And as far as I am concerned, I
6 wouldn't want any other company working with us.

7 They don't slow down our jobs, which is the
8 most important part of my business, is to make sure
9 we keep a schedule, and FPL serve extremely on time
10 with all the projects, and tremendous performance.

11 So I -- I am in favor of the rate hike as long
12 as they keep doing this type of work that's
13 phenomenal.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
15 much for testimony.

16 Anybody have any questions?

17 All right. We will move back one more time
18 Susan Clark.

19 Dale Trent. Dale Trent.

20 Sherria Williams. Sherria Williams.

21 Charles Page.

22 MR. PAGE: Good evening, Mr. Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, this is Mr. Page?

24 MR. PAGE: Yes, sir.

25 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized, Mr. Page.

1 MR. PAGE: Thank you.

2 All right. So I would like to start just to
3 say, I was born and raised here in Florida, and
4 pretty much, for as long as I can remember, been a
5 customer one way or another of FPL here.

6 Being born and raised here, have vast
7 experience with hurricanes and the negative
8 consequences that come from them. I remember
9 sleeping through power outages for many days in a
10 row, but since those times, when I was much
11 younger, we have seen FPL come through, make huge
12 improvements to the infrastructure, as well as the
13 resiliency, and the time it takes for them to get
14 power restored to all of its customers.

15 In the last couple of years, as we have faced
16 a few hurricanes that were either, you know,
17 partial hits or near misses, there -- there has
18 still been damage to folks, and despite all of
19 this, I experienced incredibly low outage times.
20 And when there was outages, incredibly quick time
21 to get back up and running. So much to the point
22 where it felt like we weren't out quite at all.

23 So the increases in their ability over my life
24 cycle here as a customer living in Florida has just
25 been vast, and it's huge. So that's my first

1 point.

2 And then the second, you know, having --
3 having moved throughout Florida many times
4 throughout adulthood for various career moves, et
5 cetera. I think I have moved somewhere between
6 eight and 12 times over the last 15 years. And
7 every -- every instance where I have had an
8 encounter with change of service with FPL have been
9 absolutely fantastic. The absolute easiest part of
10 that move, which we all know can be incredibly
11 stressful, has been that interaction with FPL;
12 whether it's been the on-line portal to do so in
13 recent years, or even previously before that,
14 having phone discussions with some of their
15 customer service representatives truly in a class
16 of their own.

17 And that comment, kind of leading into my
18 third, which is the technology they provide. So
19 logging into your account to pay a bill, you know,
20 that's come to be expected, but to log into your
21 account and be able to see energy usage by day so
22 that you can track the trends of your consumption,
23 and potentially change your habits, something that
24 I have started doing. So when I start to see my
25 bill going up, I can go in, track it down to the

1 day, wonder, hey, what was I doing that day? What
2 are some of the activities that I can maybe change
3 in my life to help me keep my costs down?

4 So just some of the technology that they are
5 providing to consumers, it really is kind of
6 unmatched when you think about a utility.

7 And so with that, happy to support the rate
8 increase here. And that's, you know, not to
9 mention the same feelings I have, as many others
10 here, so I don't want to provide too much of an
11 echo chamber.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
13 much, Mr. Page.

14 Any questions for Mr. Page?

15 Next, Chelsea Garcia. Chelsea Garcia.

16 Next Jeanna Merrifield.

17 MS. MERRIFIELD: This is Jeanna Merrifield.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Gena, I need to --

19 MS. MERRIFIELD: Thank you for the
20 opportunity --

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I need to swear you in, Ms.
22 Merrifield before it you begin.

23 (Whereupon, Jeanna Merrifield was sworn by
24 Chairman Clark.)

25 MS. MERRIFIELD: I do.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized.

2 MS. MERRIFIELD: Thank you.

3 My name is Jeanna Merrifield. I am one of
4 three owners in a small business located in Brevard
5 County, and I am happy to speak to the quality of
6 service that we receive from FPL.

7 We are first receivers of Florida seafood with
8 docks in Port Canaveral, and a processing and
9 retail facility located in Titusville, Florida,
10 with freezers and refrigeration that are key to the
11 operation of our business. We can have anywhere
12 from several hundred thousand dollars of inventory
13 to a million plus dollars of inventory in those
14 freezers given particular times of the year.

15 When we've had power outages, FPL is quick to
16 respond. They even give us a specific contact
17 person so that if our outage is not corrected in a
18 given time, we have someone we can call to check to
19 see when it will be corrected.

20 One story I have is a few years ago, when we
21 had our -- an outage, not only were they efficient
22 in dispatching us repair trucks to get us back on
23 line as soon as possible, in the weeks that
24 followed, they sent out a crew to upgrade all the
25 equipment on the poles, all the phases, and they

1 cut back any of the trees that were encroaching on
2 the power lines in order to mitigate any future
3 issues. This has kept us from power outages now
4 literally for several years.

5 I feel like FPL has treated us as though our
6 business mattered to them, and we are grateful for
7 the attention to our business, regardless of our
8 size. We support their request for a rate
9 increase.

10 And in -- finally, FPL is an incredible
11 community partner all the way around for so many
12 things, because I am very active in my community in
13 Brevard, and you can always count on FPL to step
14 up to the plate and support the community.

15 Thank you for your time.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
17 Merrifield.

18 Any questions from anyone?

19 All right. Moving to Alyssa Delgado.

20 MS. DELGADO: Hi, there. Good evening.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized, Ms.
22 Delgado.

23 MS. DELGADO: Thank you. Thank you, everyone,
24 for this time.

25 My name is Alyssa Delgado. I was born and

1 raised in South Florida, and currently live in
2 Miami Beach, where I am a Florida Power & Light
3 client.

4 My bill from April to May went from \$75 to
5 \$94. On my end, I decided to have my living room
6 at 74 degrees instead of 75, and nothing else
7 changed. You know, it's not even summer yet, but
8 it's clear our air conditioners have to work harder
9 to combat the rising temperatures. I understand
10 that.

11 The \$20 increase is already a big jump, and
12 those living in poverty definitely feel that more
13 than myself and other privileged families.
14 Emphasis on privilege. With all due respect. Most
15 of the people I have heard on this in call support
16 for raising rates are homeowners, successful
17 business owners, or lived in another state with
18 even higher rates so they don't mind.

19 The bigger issue here is that residents are
20 being pressured to think that the environmental
21 crises should be our responsibility on all fronts,
22 and that we should pay for a company's extra cost,
23 which is not fair.

24 According to U.S. Energy Information
25 Administration data for March 2021, Florida leads

1 sixth in the highest energy bills in the country,
2 right behind Texas, and they still want to raise
3 rates here and justify it by stealing empty
4 promises about the future.

5 We know how this is going to turn out. Okay,
6 we have seen and heard these promises before, and
7 it's both frustrating and insulting that history
8 and policies continue to repeat themselves over the
9 greed of large corporation.

10 FPL is overseen by NextEra, a company that,
11 according to their actions, seem to be more
12 interested in eliminating their competitors than
13 they are in transitioning to real ecofriendly
14 systems. More than half of NextEra's energy
15 generating capacity comes from nuclear reactors and
16 plants that run on natural gas and other fossil
17 fuels.

18 Promoting the fact that they use natural gas
19 more than the other terrible fossil fuels is like
20 promoting a diet of juice instead of soda for
21 weight loss. It's still not a great solution for
22 the problem, and will eventually create more
23 problems in the future anyway, as was mentioned
24 earlier in regards to rising sea levels.

25 And NextEra does a lot of good, but remember

1 they are still a business, and all businesses have
2 private interest. They have been criticized before
3 for blocking clean power initiatives and supporting
4 others with potentially detrimental impacts, an
5 example being spending 20 million to promote a 2016
6 ballot initiative in Florida that would have curbed
7 rooftop solar.

8 This amendment from 2016 had deceptive
9 language that made it seem like it would benefit
10 the people and the environment, just like
11 testimonies now. However, the real motive was that
12 it was to preserve the total monopoly that
13 investor-owned utilities currently have on rooftop
14 solar in the state, blocking out private
15 competitors. And that amendment didn't pass, but
16 the money NextEra put into that initiative sent a
17 clear message about their desire for power and
18 control.

19 So I will end with this. All right. So
20 Florida Power & Light put out an article for their
21 website in February of this year, saying NextEra
22 made Fortune's 2021 list of the world's most
23 admired companies. And that is fantastic, but it
24 was also ranked 222 -- I am sorry, 221. But FPL
25 didn't mention the ranking. Why not? Well, 221 is

1 not exactly impressive, but this proves my point.
2 Selective language is powerful. They promoted a
3 fun fact, but not all of the facts, and that's
4 exactly what manipulation looks like. People and
5 companies omit information to appear better and get
6 there way --

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Delgado, your -- can you
8 wrap it up in five seconds? Your time is up.

9 MS. DELGADO: Yes. Yes.

10 NextEra is run exceptionally great, but I do
11 not want to accept this fabricated agenda. We can
12 do better.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your
15 testimony.

16 Any questions?

17 All right. Next up Beth Rappaport.

18 MS. RAPPAPORT: Good evening, Mr. Chairman,
19 can you hear me?

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, I can hear you.

21 MS. RAPPAPORT: Thank you very much.

22 My name is Beth Rappaport, and I live in
23 Boynton Beach, Florida. I support all the positive
24 feedback provided this evening. I have been a
25 customer of Florida Power & Light since 1993. I am

1 President of the Coalition of Boynton West
2 Residential Association. We are a civic
3 organization now in our 41st year. We represent
4 114 homeowner associations and 125,000 residents.

5 I would like to praise FPL for their rapid
6 response to complaints in our area. We have our
7 own designated contact team that we work with, and
8 we get to a very specific level of discussion on
9 the complaints. We receive quarterly reports on
10 improvements in our area.

11 Our area is an interesting area because it's
12 been around for many years, over 40 years; but at
13 the same time, we have a lot of new construction,
14 growth and development, increased population
15 density. And FPL has made significant efforts on
16 hardening those existing lines, while at the same
17 time, dealing with tremendous growth in the area.

18 I am pleased to report, over the past several
19 years, less frequent outages, shorter outages
20 reducing the need for stand-alone generators, which
21 are costly for residents, and often present
22 hazards. And we do support the rate increase. We
23 have seen continual reinvestment in our area,
24 continual improvement, and we thank FPL and the
25 team of designated contacts that they have provided

1 us, we thank them for their time and dedication to
2 our residents 125,000 residents.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
4 Rappaport.

5 Any questions?

6 MS. RAPPAPORT: Thank you.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next, Ryan Shedd.

8 MR. SHEDD: Yes. Hi, can you hear me?

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, we can hear you. You
10 are recognized, Mr. Shedd.

11 MR. SHEDD: Good evening, Mr. Chairman, and
12 good evening, Commissioners. I am grateful to be
13 here. Thank you for having me.

14 I would just like to start off by saying that
15 I oppose this request. I ask that you vote against
16 approving the rate increase.

17 Coming out of 2020 and the beginning of 2021,
18 same, we are still in this pandemic, seeing
19 everything that Floridians and working class people
20 have gone through over the last year-and-a-half,
21 the record profits that FPL has made, my friends
22 and neighbors are still suffering. We are not out
23 of this yet. Asking for a rate increase right now
24 is totally inappropriate.

25 In the last 10 years that I have lived in

1 Florida, I have seen FPL spend more money to fight
2 regular Floridians in trying to diversify and green
3 our -- our electricity, our electrical sources, and
4 spend more money against that, and as well spending
5 money on increasing fossil fuels. Natural gas is
6 still a fossil fuel. It might be better than coal,
7 but it's still a fossil fuel, and we need to be
8 working more aggressively further for solar,
9 further for other alternative non-fossil fuel forms
10 of electricity.

11 I think that this is just a totally
12 inappropriate time to be asking this at a time with
13 record profits, where money is being spent as it
14 is, while people are still suffering. Working
15 class people are struggling to pay all of their
16 bills, let alone their utility bills. It's just --
17 it's -- it's not right, and I ask that you vote
18 against it.

19 Thank you for your time. Have a great
20 evening.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great. Thank you very much,
22 Mr. Shedd.

23 Anyone have any questions?

24 Next up, Keith Koenig.

25 MR. KOENIG: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Koenig, I need to
2 swear -- Mr. Koenig, I need to swear you in. Mr.
3 Koenig, I need to spare swear you in before you
4 begin your testimony, please.

5 (Whereupon, Keith Koenig was sworn by Chairman
6 Clark.)

7 MR. KOENIG: Yes, sir. I do.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. Thank you very much.
9 You are recognized.

10 MR. KOENIG: Okay. Thank you very much for
11 the opportunity.

12 My name is Keith Koenig. I am CEO of City
13 Furniture. We are a chain of 34 furniture stores
14 across mostly South Florida, coming into Central
15 Florida, Tampa. I am also a resident of
16 Plantation, Florida, and a proud customer of FPL.

17 Our annual bills are over \$2 million, and I
18 feel like we are quite privileged to have FPL as
19 our provider. And the reason is, because I talk to
20 people across the country, furniture companies, and
21 in Texas and in California, we -- we fair much more
22 favorably than they do.

23 So this message is all about trust, and I
24 believe FPL has earned our trust. How have they
25 earned our trust? They have earned our trust by

1 providing low rates compared to other utilities.
2 They have learned -- they have invested heavily in
3 hardening our utilities. They have learned -- they
4 have invested heavily in hardening our utilities.
5 I see it in my neighborhood. I see it when I drive
6 arranged South Florida. They have -- they have
7 provided a good experience for everybody. I can
8 see it when we are opening up new furniture stores
9 or expanding or need any change. And on top of
10 that, they have been innovative.

11 Now, our warehouse in Ft. Lauderdale has a big
12 generator. They have worked with us to actually
13 pay us to provide backup service when they are at
14 peak demand. Rather than spending more money to
15 invest in more capabilities, and more capacity for
16 peak demand, they have been innovative enough to be
17 able to say, you have capacity and you can go
18 on-line, if we can lock into your capacity, we can
19 actually reward you. So they've kept our bills
20 lower.

21 So they've earned my trust, and I am here to
22 speak on their behalf. I would say, if they ask
23 for a rate increase, they are going to invest in
24 the green future that we all want. They are going
25 to invest in the infrastructure that we all want.

1 And these people are capable. Trust them. Do it.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, sir.

4 Anyone have any questions?

5 Next up, and will need to be sworn in, Asit
6 Bhatt. Asit Bhatt, B-H-A-T-T.

7 Darrell Searcy.

8 MS. CLARK: Mr. Chairperson.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes.

10 MS. CLARK: This is Susan Clark. I was having
11 difficulty getting on. I was supposed to speak
12 earlier. Would it be all right if I spoke now?

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I am sorry. Say your name
14 again, please.

15 MS. CLARK: Susan Clark.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Susan, you are
17 recognized.

18 MS. CLARK: Than you so much.

19 I have been a customer of Gulf Power for the
20 last 10 years, and was a previous customer from
21 1989 to 2000. We seem to have very few outages.
22 And when we do have outages, we have a very quick
23 response from Gulf Power.

24 During Sally, we were without power for four
25 days. And Sally, as you South Florida people may

1 not know, but us folks up here in the Panhandle, it
2 was a pretty strong Category 2.

3 To put that in perspective, during and after
4 Hurricane Erin, which was in -- oh, golly, I
5 forget -- but anyway, Erin was a Category 1, and we
6 were out of power for seven days, I believe that
7 was in '95. But just to put that in perspective,
8 it shows that the service has gotten better, the
9 infrastructure is better, and I think that it's
10 important that we continue to support Gulf Power
11 and Florida Power & Light in building what we need
12 for our growth. We are having an awful lot of
13 growth in our area as well, lots of building, and I
14 think that this will help us with our
15 infrastructure.

16 Thank you so very much for giving me this
17 opportunity, and I apologize for not being able to
18 get on sooner.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: No problem. Thank you very
20 much, Ms. Clark.

21 One more time for Darrell Searcy.

22 MR. SEARCY: This is Darrell.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Darrell. I need to
24 swear you in before you testify.

25 (Whereupon, Darrell Searcy was sworn by

1 Chairman Clark.)

2 MR. SEARCY: I do. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: You are recognized for three
4 minutes, sir.

5 MR. SEARCY: Mr. Chairman, I am calling in
6 support of FPL. I am a resident of Palm Beach
7 Gardens, Florida. One of the fastest growing areas
8 in the state of Florida. I have also owned
9 property outside of the state of Florida, and dealt
10 with other -- other electric companies. And I have
11 got to tell you, the customer service with FPL is
12 top, Tier 1. We are very comfortable when we sleep
13 at night.

14 I travel a lot. I am very comfortable with my
15 son and my wife home when I am not there, that they
16 are going to be safe and that they are going to be
17 comfortable.

18 We have -- I have seen and am impressed with
19 the level of investment that FPL is making in our
20 community, and throughout the state of Florida. I
21 am impressed with the investment into newer
22 technologies, in lowering the carbon footprint. It
23 may not be perfect, but it is better than most.

24 And I think that they deserve an opportunity
25 to get this rate increase, the first one in five

1 years. And I think that they are going to, as my
2 gentleman from City Furniture said, they are going
3 to continue to invest in our community, and I
4 completely support FPL in this rate increase.

5 Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you, Mr.
7 Searcy.

8 Any questions?

9 Layne Pazzaglia. Layne Pa --

10 MS. PAZZAGLIA: Layne Pazzaglia.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Go ahead.

12 MS. PAZZAGLIA: Hi. I am a resident of Palm
13 Beach County. I would like to thank you for the
14 opportunity to speak today.

15 My home is served by FPL, however, I run small
16 business that is not served by FPL. So therefore,
17 I have experienced firsthand the differences in
18 reliability and cost of two different electric
19 providers.

20 FPL has always been topnotch in terms of
21 reliability at a reasonable price. If there is
22 ever an issue, FPL's customer service and outreach
23 provides the information we need as customers to
24 stay informed of the progress.

25 I also appreciate how FPL has continued to

1 keep bills low, all while being still active in our
2 community with their hardening projects. In fact,
3 they recently completed a project on my main
4 roadway, and watching them made me appreciate even
5 more the work they do and the quality of service
6 they provide.

7 I am seeing the benefits of the investments
8 FPL is making in order to continue providing the
9 most reliable service. I also fully understand
10 that there are costs associated to those
11 investments, and I have no issue paying a little
12 more to continue receiving the most reliable
13 service.

14 I stated earlier that our business is not
15 served by FPL. And I can say we do not receive the
16 same level of service that FPL provides. For those
17 reasons, I support FPL's rate proposal.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
19 much.

20 Any of questions?

21 All right next to testify, I'm going to try
22 this one -- Rock Aboujaoude.

23 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Hi. Good evening. Can you
24 hear me?

25 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir. You are

1 recognized.

2 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Thank you.

3 First of all, thank you all for providing this
4 thankless service, and I applaud you --

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Aboujaoude, we are not
6 able to hear you. Can you speak up, or directly
7 into your microphone?

8 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Okay. I will speak louder.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: That's better.

10 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Can you hear me better now?

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir, we can hear you
12 now.

13 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: All right. I hope you heard
14 that I thanked you for doing what you are doing.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, sir.

16 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Now, in full disclosure, I am
17 a civil engineer, and as a -- I have a consulting
18 practice, and FPL is a client of mine.

19 So for the last 11 years, I have been
20 associated with FPL in Hendry County, which is a
21 poor rural county. And in those 11 years, FPL -- I
22 have helped FPL construct two large solar
23 generating facilities, 74 megawatts each, and there
24 is two more about to be constructed. The benefits
25 for the county are tremendous given our initial

1 budget.

2 In my capacity --

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Aboujaoude, I am not able
4 to hear you. I'm not sure my court reporter is
5 either. My court reporter on the line, can you
6 hear?

7 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: I'm on a landline. I will
8 try to shout a little louder.

9 COURT REPORTER: I'm good. I can hear him.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. Wow, you're on a
11 landline -- we may be the only ones having
12 problems. Give me another try. We will give you a
13 little extra time there. No problem.

14 MR. ABOUJAOUDE: Okay. In my capacity as a
15 consultant and a contractor in Hendry County, I
16 have had to work with FPL staff, as well as LCEC,
17 that's Lee County Electric Co-op, Glades Electric
18 Co-op and Clewiston Utilities, and I can tell you
19 that I am very happy to work with the FPL staff,
20 both the field staff and -- and office staff.
21 Their response is typically commendable, certainly
22 during the outages. We have no trouble with them.

23 Like others before me, I am -- I am
24 ecologically minded, and I know that we must err on
25 the side of caution with this planet. So nothing

1 good comes easy or free. And like taxes, we don't
2 mind paying taxes if we get something in exchange.
3 And I believe, based on my experience with -- and
4 other invoices, I have two other businesses, and I
5 pay bills two other places. Based on my
6 experience, the rates we are paying FPL are
7 significantly lower. And even with this increase,
8 they are still going to be lower than what I pay in
9 the two other locations I have.

10 And all I want to say now is may God bless you
11 and give you wisdom as you make the decision,
12 because in my opinion, this rate increase may not
13 be enough to do what we need to do to save this --

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
15 much for your testimony today.

16 Are there any questions?

17 All right. We will move to our next witness.
18 Rafael Gomez. Rafael Gomez.

19 All right. Next is Erik Ofengand.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: How about Dale -- oh,
21 never mind.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Hello. I am sorry, Mr.
23 Ofengand, are you there?

24 MR. OFENGAND: Yes, hi. I am here. Can you
25 hear me?

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, I can hear you. I need
2 to swear you in before you begin.

3 (Whereupon, Erik Ofengand was sworn by
4 Chairman Clark.)

5 MR. OFENGAND: Yes.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are
7 recognized for three minutes, sir.

8 MR. OFENGAND: Thank you.

9 Yes, I would just like to go on record to
10 oppose this rate hike. I have lived here in
11 Miami-Dade County for 20 years, and seeing rates,
12 you know, go up and up and up. You know, I
13 definitely think, you know, and certainly do
14 applaud FPL for, you know, putting -- putting
15 efforts into, you know, storm hardening and
16 whatnot. But obviously, there are so many people
17 now who are struggling to pay their electric bill,
18 you know, given the pandemic and the economic
19 hardships, I believe there is over half-a-million
20 people that are already behind on their -- on their
21 bills. Now does not seem like a good time to be
22 raising rates even further.

23 The ACEEE reported recently that FPL was 51st
24 out of 52 utility companies when it comes to energy
25 efficiency. And I think that this would be --

1 (inaudible) -- that FPL should take, you know, if
2 they want to, you know, try to recover some funds,
3 they could do so by lowering costs for everybody,
4 including themselves, by improving energy
5 efficiency across the board. And I really would
6 like to see FPL do a lot more to encourage that,
7 especially for folks who are already struggling to
8 pay their bills.

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
10 much.

11 Are there any questions?

12 All right. Next to testify, Simon Gotera.

13 MR. GOTERA: Yes, sir. Hello. Thank you, Mr.
14 Chair. Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir. You are
16 recognized.

17 MR. GOTERA: Thank you. No oath?

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Mr. Gotera?

19 MR. GOTERA: No oath?

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Is this Mr. Gotera?

21 MR. GOTERA: Can you hear me? Yes.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir. You are recognized
23 to speak for three minutes.

24 MR. GOTERA: Thank you.

25 My name is Simon Gotera. I have been a

1 resident of Miami-Dade County, born and raised,
2 since I was born, 20 years now.

3 I would like to say that I think it's crucial
4 for the committee to consider what it means to
5 provide power and energy at reasonable rates and
6 costs.

7 I believe everyone who has supported the rate
8 increase has mentioned how wonderful the service
9 has been from FPL, and how they have really been
10 able to manage and do very, very, very well with
11 their job and what their job description is. And I
12 think that if that is the case, and I do believe
13 that it is when it comes to customer service, then
14 they probably have enough funding to manage every
15 single thing that they have to do. They have
16 proven time and time again. There is --
17 (inaudible) -- need this increase, and I believe
18 that because of that we should not be supporting
19 this rate increase. They are doing okay. And
20 instead, we should be asking FPL to not transition
21 backwards by creating more old fossil fuel plants,
22 and instead investing in cleaner sources of energy
23 in order to protect Floridan residents. I think
24 it's crucial that we account for the fact that
25 fossil fuel plants are not clean, and they do

1 pollute and they harm the residents near them,
2 which in most cases, I believe over 75 percent of
3 the time, those would be black communities that are
4 most likely affected by those plants. So instead,
5 we should be asking FPL to stop by acting as though
6 they are one of the largest investors in green
7 energy and actually protect the residents that it
8 is supposed to be -- (inaudible) --

9 So they -- FPL should not ask for more money,
10 rather, invest it better in order to reduce prices
11 for everyone, and to reduce their own costs so that
12 we have the most reasonable energy for our money.

13 Thank you, Chair and committee.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
15 much for your testimony.

16 Any of questions?

17 All right. Next Charles Caulkins.

18 MR. CAULKINS: Good evening, Mr. Chair. My
19 name is Charles Caulkins. I am a resident of Ft.
20 Lauderdale. I live at 362 Southeast 26th Avenue.
21 I have been a Florida resident for 35 years, and an
22 FPL customer for 35 years. I am also the Chair of
23 the Florida Chamber of Commerce, AM partner in the
24 national law firm of Fisher Phillips. My comments
25 today are solely on my own behalf.

1 I am a very satisfied FPL customer, especially
2 in the past 15 years. They have provided, I think,
3 excellent and reliable service. They are
4 responsive to any of power related issues, as best
5 I can tell. Their staff are well trained in
6 delivering customer service. Their web based
7 system for taking in service issues, keeping the
8 customer advised on the status of repairs and the
9 follow-up, I think, is remarkable.

10 As you know, as we all know, in 2005, we were
11 hit with Hurricane Wilma, and it kicked South
12 Florida in the butt, myself included. It was one
13 of the most destructive hurricanes to hit South
14 Florida. Rather than shirk from any
15 responsibility, FPL, from my vantage point,
16 acknowledged that they had a lot of work to do to
17 protect us in the future, and work they did. This
18 paid off when Hurricane Irma hit us in 2017, and I
19 think they should be acknowledged for that kind of
20 efforts they put in.

21 To me, FPL has provided -- proven by their
22 actions that they are going to be in the Vanguard
23 of power companies in America. We need that in
24 South Florida, and in Florida. They provide
25 reliable power and related services to the

1 community.

2 I think our rates are some of the best in the
3 United States. I have offices in many states, and
4 I can tell you for sure that the power rates down
5 here are low compared to those other states.

6 This is good for individual customers, and
7 it's good for business. It's also a great talking
8 point when you are trying to recruit new businesses
9 into South Florida, or to stay here.

10 I also want to mention that FPL actively
11 participates in many civic organizations like the
12 Broward Workshop, the Ft. Lauderdale Chamber and
13 Florida Chamber. These are good things that
14 companies should do.

15 FPL, like other private companies, I believe
16 is entitled to earn a fair profit. I think their
17 pending request is moderate and is well deserved.
18 This is something they have earned, in my opinion.
19 I encourage you to approve the request and send a
20 message to everybody that the PSC will encourage a
21 company like FPL to continue their current course
22 of providing consumers and businesses with reliable
23 energy at a fair price.

24 Thank you for your attention. Please have a
25 good evening.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
2 Caulkins.

3 Any questions for Mr. Caulkins?

4 All right. We will move to our next person,
5 Alanka Chrispin. Alanka Chrispin.

6 Next is Shane LeMar. Shane LeMar. Yes.

7 MR. LEMAR: Good evening, Mr. Chairman. Can
8 you hear me?

9 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, we can hear you. Is
10 this Mr. LeMar.

11 MR. LEMAR: Yes, it is.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are
13 recognized, sir.

14 MR. LEMAR: Okay. Thank you very much.

15 I am very happy to hear the support that
16 Florida Power & Light has gotten from the customer
17 base, because it is well-deserved. I have lived in
18 Florida since 1973, when I grew up here, and I now
19 live in Pompano Beach in a condominium up on the
20 fourth floor, and when we have hurricanes it is
21 very difficult to lose power and to actually just
22 survive. I have lived on the beach.

23 I have a business in Oakland Park, Florida,
24 where we are an entertainment and catering
25 business. That means I have refrigerators and

1 freezers full of inspected food, and when we go
2 down we have to report back to the Health
3 Department that we have lost power and energy.

4 I have lived through Hurricane David in 1979,
5 Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and Wicked Wilma in 2005,
6 and I realized what a treasurer Florida Power &
7 Light is. Not only is their own staff getting us
8 back up and running, but bringing in vendors from
9 as far as away as Michigan to get us back up and
10 running, because we know when we go down for a
11 hurricane, it's not just the event itself, it's the
12 post-event and the confidence that we lose around
13 the country if we can't get back in business.

14 So again, I am a big supporter of Florida
15 Power & Light, and I hope that you use wisdom and
16 you vote in favor of it.

17 Thank you so very much, and God bless you all.
18 That's it.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for your testimony,
20 Mr. LeMar.

21 Anyone have any questions?

22 Next up, Neil Jurado. Neil Jurado.

23 Dennis Johnson. Dennis Johnson.

24 Oliver Torres.

25 MR. TORRES: Hi. This is Oliver Torres. Can

1 you hear me?

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Torres, you are
3 recognized for three minutes, sir.

4 MR. TORRES: My name is Oliver Torres. I am a
5 Miami native and current city resident. I'm a
6 hard-working middle class community member. I am
7 30 years old, and have been an FPL client for many
8 years, and strongly against the FPL proposed price
9 increase.

10 The middle class is getting pushed out of
11 Miami. Just look at Hamilton on the Bay. Google
12 it. Developer corporations are buying other
13 buildings and pushing us out. Not even the middle
14 class can afford to live in Miami right now. Rent
15 prices have never been higher, and even
16 hard-working residents with descent jobs are
17 struggling to stay afloat. For many families that
18 started struggling even more curing COVID, this has
19 completely destroyed of their livelihoods.

20 High energy burdens result in difficult
21 tradeoffs between paying for energy bills or other
22 necessities, like food, medical care, shut off AC
23 to cut costs. We should not have to put people the
24 position to decide between necessities.

25 Low-income and communities of color in Florida

1 face high energy burdens, leaving them outside the
2 portion of their incomes goes towards home energy
3 bills, including electricity, natural gas and other
4 heating fuels.

5 650,000 residential customers last month were
6 late on their bill. Likely over one million
7 Floridians. And now FPL is going to recover more
8 profit from the same people.

9 FPL keeps on saying that they are the lowest,
10 but it's false. They are currently the seventh
11 highest rate in the nation, and the ACEEE report
12 ranks FPL 51 of 52 major utility companies when it
13 comes to energy efficiency, meaning saving energy
14 and costs.

15 It's perplexing the community members are
16 letting us talk about the things FPL does well
17 without referencing a justification for an
18 increase. From my personal experience organizing
19 community members, it is extremely difficult to do
20 that unless they have a clear incentive to have
21 people show up to these meetings. Never before
22 today had I heard of a small business owner speak
23 in favor of an unprecedented price increase that
24 will ultimately make keeping doors open more
25 challenging. And for the CEO of a major

1 corporation to comment and opine on a rate increase
2 that will disproportionately impact the middle and
3 low income communities in our state it's frankly
4 outrageous. No one can justify that that is the
5 representative perspective of our community. The
6 comments make me deeply question what incentives
7 these speakers are seeking for themselves, while
8 being told they will be charged 20 percent more
9 during the time when living costs are higher than
10 they have ever been.

11 I work with many community members across the
12 state who are barely making it. An additional
13 charge could mean a path to homelessness. Many
14 community members have multiple jobs just to make
15 ends meet, yet their power has been shut off by
16 FPL, sometimes repeatedly.

17 It is a huge privilege to be able to make the
18 time to attend a hearing like this, but --
19 (inaudible) -- of all community members, especially
20 the ones whose lives would be destroyed by an
21 additional burden of a major increase in utility
22 costs, FPL is asking what can they do, be --

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Torres, could you wrap
24 your --

25 MR. TORRES: -- not raising prices --

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Torres, could you wrap
2 your comments up?

3 (Multiple speakers.)

4 MR. TORRES: -- even right now for Miami
5 residents, the increase at a time --

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Torres --

7 MR. TORRES: -- outrageous and out of touch --

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Torres, could you wrap
9 your comments up for us? Your three minutes are
10 up.

11 MR. TORRES: I am done.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, sir.

13 Any questions for Mr. Torres?

14 All right. Next up Yesenia Berrios. Yesenia
15 Berrios.

16 Jasmine O'Neil. Jasmine O'Neil.

17 Edgardo Ariza. Edgardo Ariza.

18 Alexander Lorenzo.

19 MR. LORENZO: Good evening. Alexander
20 Lorenzo.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, Mr. Lorenzo, you are
22 recognized for three minutes, sir.

23 MR. LORENZO: Thank you. I will be as brief
24 as possible.

25 I was born and raised -- (inaudible) -- here

1 in Miami, and an owner of a new house, and for
2 about two years. And I mean, I have nothing but
3 good things to say, and I think it's unreasonable
4 not to expect an increase given the circumstances
5 we have going on, and solar power doesn't come
6 overnight. So, I mean, this is completely expected
7 to see a small increase.

8 I have had very good experiences with FPL,
9 with their app, with their services, and that's
10 pretty much all I really have to say. Sorry.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right.

12 MR. LORENZO: Yes, that's -- Yeah, I just
13 wanted to keep it as brief as possible. I am
14 sorry. I am -- just knowing the amount of people
15 you need to listen to.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for that.
17 That is greatly appreciated.

18 Anyone have any questions for Mr. Lorenzo?

19 All right. Thank you for your testimony
20 today, sir.

21 MR. LORENZO: Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up, Jesus Larranaga,
23 Jesus Larranaga.

24 Tyler Villegas. Tyler Villegas.

25 Andrew --

1 MR. REHWINKEL: How about Dale --

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, I am sorry. Who is
3 this?

4 MR. TRENT: Dale Trent, T-R-E-N-T.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Trent, okay. We will go
6 ahead and let you speak now.

7 Mr. Trent, you are recognized for three
8 minutes, sir.

9 MR. TRENT: Okay. I have lived in Satellite
10 Beach, Florida, Brevard County, on the east coast,
11 for about 28 years now, and I can honestly say that
12 the service, certainly over the last 10 years,
13 provided by FPL has improved dramatically. I have
14 seen them replacing numerous, multiple power poles
15 on the beach side where I live, and throughout
16 Brevard County. And whenever there is a service
17 outage, they are quick to respond, and quite
18 frankly, very few service outages. So quite
19 frankly, I am in favor of granting FPL of this
20 little pay -- or rate increase because I think they
21 are providing great service. And that's all I have
22 to say.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
24 Trent. I appreciate your testimony today.

25 Does anyone have questions for Mr. Trent?

1 All right. Next up, Andrew Hellinger. Andrew
2 Hellinger.

3 Brian Mungin.

4 We kept people up past their bedtimes tonight.
5 David Whelpley.

6 MR. WHELPLEY: Yes, sir.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Mr. Whelpley, you are
8 recognized.

9 MR. WHELPLEY: Thank you, sir.

10 Good evening. My name is David Whelpley. I
11 am a resident of Miami, primarily live in the City
12 of Pinecrest, and I just wanted to say that I
13 actually -- you know, I know there is a number of
14 different variables of people that support and
15 don't support, but I did want to offer some
16 comments tonight that probably is in favor of some
17 support.

18 A slight what I understand to be 35 cents a
19 day probably typical bill increase doesn't seem
20 like a lot of money in some respects, right, to
21 some people, but I do want to give you a primary
22 example of why I do support FPL and the rate
23 increase.

24 Being a homeowner in the City of Pinecrest, as
25 you know, this is an older -- older city, it's an

1 older area of Miami that has all overhead power in
2 there. So obviously, when we get heavy storms or,
3 you know, even in the event of hurricanes, it's
4 very susceptible to wind damage and loss of power.
5 But I do know that FPL has been internally, within
6 the city right now, working diligently over the
7 past couple of years beginning to bring underground
8 service into the community to lessen the impacts
9 that we would all see in the event of a hurricane,
10 or in the event of these strong storms that create
11 power outages.

12 So one of the things that I was impressed with
13 by FPL is I do have a small little house that we
14 actually, my wife and I have had as a rental, and
15 we own that house. And FPL actually was putting in
16 the underground service in that area, needed a
17 consent assignment for us to consent to putting the
18 underground service over to the box that's at that
19 house. They went to our tenants, talked to our
20 tenants. Our tenants gave them our address, and an
21 FPL representative actually showed up at our house,
22 our personal residence, with the consent affidavit
23 to be signed, and explained to us exactly what was
24 going on over there to get that underground power
25 in.

1 And I signed it immediately, but I left
2 thinking to my wife, wow, what kind of service do
3 we get in this world, in this day, in this age
4 that's so personalized that they actually reached
5 out to find me to actually get me to sign that so
6 they could contribute to the underground service
7 being put into the neighborhood for the benefit of
8 all.

9 So that's all I wanted to say was, you know, a
10 simple 35 cents a day increase doesn't sound like a
11 lot of money for a rate increase to support that
12 type of service.

13 Thank you, sir. Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Mr.
15 Whelpley.

16 Anybody have any questions?

17 MR. JOHNSON: Mr. Commissioner, can you hear
18 me?

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, I can hear you.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Excuse me. This is Dennis
21 Johnson. I am so sorry. I could not get unmuted
22 and I missed my time, and I apologize.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: No problem, Mr. Johnson. You
24 are recognized for three minutes, sir. But before
25 we do, I need to swear you in first, Mr. Johnson.

1 (Whereupon, Dennis Johnson was sworn by
2 Chairman Clark.)

3 MR. JOHNSON: Yes, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Now you are
5 recognized.

6 MS. JOHNSON: Let me say this -- thank you,
7 sir.

8 I have only been in Miami three years. I am
9 from Philadelphia, up north, and I am going to say
10 this. I honestly can say your service is
11 wonderful. I really do appreciate it. The few
12 times that we've had some outages, you guys have
13 always got us back on-line earlier than you said.
14 You know, when you go on-line, it says, oh, okay,
15 we will get you on in an hour, or whatever, it's
16 always been early. And I -- and I really
17 appreciate that, because I know what it's like to
18 be cold and I know what it's like to be hot.

19 My -- and I -- I do -- I do say that you
20 should get your rate increase. I just say that
21 maybe we should hold off a little bit, only because
22 we don't know what's going to go on with this new
23 strain of COVID. And if it turns out worse than we
24 may think it is, and people are not getting
25 vaccinated, and we may, I don't know, have to go

1 down to it a lockdown again, it could be really a
2 hardship on folks who are having already a hard
3 time.

4 So like I say, I -- I am for a rate increase,
5 I am just saying just can we wait a little bit
6 longer just in case?

7 That's it.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
9 much, Mr. Johnson.

10 Next up -- any questions --

11 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you, sir.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: -- any questions for Mr.
13 Johnson?

14 Seeing none, Salesia Smith-Gordon?

15 MS. SMITH-GORDON: Hi. Yes. Good evening.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Hi, Salesia, you are
17 recognized.

18 MS. SMITH-GORDON: Thank you.

19 I'm Salesia Smith-Gordon. I am a native
20 Floridan. I am the owner of a commercial building
21 downtown West Palm Beach at 922 2nd Street, with a
22 satellite office in Belle Glade, Florida. I'm a
23 homeowner in Haverhill, Florida, Puerto Rico and
24 North Carolina, which FPL has, indeed, had a
25 positive influence. My FPL experiences have been

1 positive, both as a business owner and a homeowner.

2 Outside of Florida, I have definitely seen my
3 share of disaster and unreliable electricity, and I
4 really do thank FPL for coming in to those, to the
5 commonwealth, to the island of Puerto Rico and to
6 North Carolina to help save the day.

7 I recognize that FPL's involvement,
8 sportiveness and a financial investment in disaster
9 relief in advance in positive community
10 organizations here in West Palm Beach and in
11 Florida, and substantial ventures, such as the --
12 (inaudible) -- center, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority
13 and other organizations for which I am involved, I
14 appreciate those efforts.

15 I really also appreciate this leadership in
16 solar energy projects for cleaner energy. It is
17 definitely forward-thinking.

18 I give a special thank you to FPL's aid in
19 disaster relieve in Puerto Rico after Hurricane
20 Maria, which affected and devastated the island,
21 affected my home and my neighbors' lives.

22 FPL's corporate humanity has not gone
23 unnoticed. However, consumers must still have a
24 safe and reliable high quality utility service at a
25 reasonable and affordable rate.

1 Although a rate increase may not personally
2 effect me, as a legal advocate for others, I
3 consider others who may be greatly affected. I ask
4 the Commission to please consider that COVID has
5 hit so many people so hard in all walks of life,
6 especially people of color, the elderly and many
7 small business owners, yet utility services remains
8 a necessity.

9 The FPL corporate culture is an excellent
10 business model for others to follow. I am not
11 employed by FPL, as you know, I am a solo
12 practitioner, but I recognize the culture.

13 While quality -- the quality of FPL service is
14 superb, affordability is currently a struggle for
15 many people who are less fortunate than I, and who
16 are less fortunate than many people who spoke
17 today. An increase, especially now, may be a great
18 challenge for many people.

19 I do hope that FPL continues its positive
20 corporate humanity and consider if a rate increase
21 is really necessary for citizens at this point in
22 time. I thank --

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Ms. Smith-Gordon, we are
24 having a problem understanding you. Can you speak
25 up. I was waiting on the court reporter to tell me

1 she was having a problem, but she's not apparently.
2 Can you speak a little louder?

3 You can hear her okay, Debbie?

4 COURT REPORTER: I can hear.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Okay. Great.

6 All right. Just speak a little louder as you
7 wrap up, please.

8 MS. SMITH-GORDON: All right. As a wrapup, I
9 just thank FPL for its continued positive corporate
10 humanity, and consider whether or not a rate
11 increase, as of right now, is really necessary for
12 citizens at this point in time. I thank FPL for
13 its superb service.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
16 much for your testimony.

17 Anyone have any questions?

18 All right. Let's move to our next witness,
19 Margo Miller.

20 MS. MILLER: Hi there.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. Ms. Miller, you are
22 recognized for three minutes.

23 MS. MILLER: Thank you, sir.

24 So hi there. This is Margo Miller, and I am
25 representing a condominium association in Sarasota,

1 which is an FPL customer, and also my husband and
2 I, we own a unit in the condominium. We've lived
3 in Sarasota since 2005.

4 So our six-unit condo association is
5 self-managed, and we try to hold down our expenses,
6 and -- but like most Florida citizens, I believe,
7 our building insurance premiums increased 22
8 percent this year. Our elevator maintenance,
9 repairs, et cetera, cost increases.

10 So I am in my early 60s and have long been
11 concerned about fossil fuel energy. A primary
12 reason my husband and I live in the City of
13 Sarasota is so we may walk for errands and market,
14 to dinner, et cetera, instead of driving.

15 15 years ago, I became a vegan, also known as
16 plant-based first for the animals, but then
17 realized it's beneficial for the environment and
18 human health care costs. I pick up trash as I walk
19 along Sarasota Bay.

20 I am just saying this because I want you to
21 know I don't just talk the talk about that bad,
22 evil climate destroying fossil fuels generation, I
23 walk the talk. It's my lifestyle, and I support an
24 environmentally friendly, sustainable, renewable
25 energy economy.

1 The public should not be required to
2 financially bail out utility companies which put
3 unreasonable and unfair -- which I guess is
4 subjective -- profit over human lives in the
5 environment.

6 I think the residents should not pay for
7 residents, including the condo association
8 residents which are among those, should not pay for
9 FPL's poor decisions in construction of 20th
10 Century technology.

11 So to be quick -- I hope -- I have listened
12 this whole evening to the Larsons' attorney, Vote
13 Solar, Florida Rising, FAIR, Mr. Quinlan, Ms.
14 Delgado, and I agree with them.

15 I am not an FPL employee or stockholder, or
16 related to FPL in any way except as a customer,
17 indeed, a satisfied customer, because I -- I won't
18 to sing its praises I have heard this evening, as
19 it accomplishes what it's supposed to do.

20 This is about a 20-percent increase in its
21 rate in support -- excuse me, this is about a
22 20-percent increase in its rates to build 20th
23 Century technology, which again, is, I think,
24 antiquated, and we need to support renewable and
25 green energy.

1 And as an aside, let me say, I am --
2 (inaudible) -- by all the people calling in to
3 support a 20-percent increase. It's like, thank
4 you, sir, may I have another? So -- but thank you
5 for your time. I appreciate it.

6 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
7 Miller.

8 Anyone have any questions?

9 Next, Mike Vaupel. Mike Vaupel.

10 Christopher Serafin. Christopher Serafin.

11 Dennis Battistella.

12 MR. BATTISTELLA: Yes. Here I am.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. Mr. Battistella, you
14 are recognized.

15 MR. BATTISTELLA: Thank you.

16 FPL has -- they've come a long way since 1972,
17 when I first moved to Florida. And when I moved to
18 Florida in October 1972, I became a customer of
19 FPL, so it's almost 50 years I have been a
20 customer.

21 Back then, there was an expression FPL stood
22 for "Flicker Pop & Light Company", because if you
23 had a computer back then and you were working in a
24 business, most of us did not have a backup for the
25 computers, and so you would be there entering data

1 and all of a sudden, the power would go out and you
2 lost all of your data and you would start all over
3 again. But in recent years, their response to my
4 problems -- to my problems regarding down time and
5 power has been excellent. Their technology to keep
6 you up-to-date when your power will be restored is
7 very impressive.

8 As an operation manager at three different
9 manufacturing companies in South Florida over 15
10 years, they have provided excellent service for us.

11 As a community partner in supporting the local
12 manufacturing association for over 20 years, no one
13 has come close to their participation in helping
14 the community.

15 As a homeowner, their response time and
16 honesty has been wonderful. One time when I had a
17 power outage, they fixed the transformer that was
18 outside of my house much earlier than they even
19 promised on their -- on their website?

20 It's been mentioned before but it's probably
21 not come clear to a lot of people, that their
22 rates, again, I believe they have not changed in
23 the last 15 years. So we may be using more power
24 and our power bill is going to go up, but the rates
25 have actually stayed the same from 15 years ago.

1 Their concern for the climate and environment
2 is commendable. They haven't been sitting on their
3 laurels. Each year they have their quality
4 showcase, where anyone can go and visit where each
5 department at FPL competes to show how they have
6 become more efficient and improved their processes
7 within their department.

8 They truly believe in continuous improvement.
9 If we all could follow these premises, we would
10 again become the best country in the world.

11 FPL can continue to provide service as usual
12 without any rate increase. However, if you want
13 FPL, like any -- any other person, or any other
14 company, just to continue to be the same they are,
15 then no rate increase is necessary, but if you
16 want -- if you want to become better, you want FPL
17 to become better, and our power to be more secure
18 and more economical, they need to invest, so their
19 services must ask for he -- allow for us to help
20 them. I mean, you don't get anything in the end
21 until you invest in the beginning.

22 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
23 much for your testimony today.

24 Are there any questions for Mr. Battistella?

25 All right. Next up we have Kevin Morenza.

1 MR. MORENZA: Hello. Good evening, Mr.
2 Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir. You are
4 recognized, Mr. Morenza.

5 MR. MORENZA: Thank you.

6 So basically, you know, I have been listening
7 to the entire phone call, so I feel like I have
8 heard a lot more testimony from, you know, lots of
9 different people.

10 You know, like anybody else I would like to
11 say that obviously, you know, who really wants to
12 vote for an increase. You know, obviously, we
13 would like to pay as little as possible, but I
14 understand we are unique to other areas, between
15 hurricanes and other issues, there is definitely
16 needed improvement to our infrastructure. I think
17 FPL definitely made many improvements -- excuse me,
18 I am in my vehicle. I am just it about to get out
19 of it -- but, you know, there has definitely been a
20 lot of improvement, and that is, you know, a huge
21 positive, and many more improvements need to be
22 made.

23 Recently in Texas, there was a storm. Power
24 was knocked out for many years for a long period of
25 time, and that is not something I want to

1 experience here in Florida. I think the longest I
2 have ever had my power out was at least two days at
3 most, uncomfortable of course, but, you know, it
4 comes with the territory.

5 You know, that being said, I have to agree
6 with the rate increase, and I have to agree with
7 the fact that, you know, that we do need to make
8 improvements, and that there will definitely need
9 to be, you know, increases in our rates as we make
10 those improvements.

11 I am a customer, both residentially and for a
12 small business, True CBD, LLC, and overall, my
13 experience with FPL has been mostly perfect. I
14 mean, if I call, or if I go on-line, my -- you
15 know, I get help basically right away.

16 So with that being said, I am in favor of the
17 rate increase.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
19 much, Mr. Morenza.

20 Anybody have any questions for Mr. Morenza?

21 MR. MORENZA: You're welcome. Thank you for
22 the time.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Next up, Avi Bauman. Avi
24 Bauman, Bowman [sic].

25 Okay Jordan Whitemire.

1 MR. WHITMIRE: Yep, I am here.

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Mr. Whitmire, you
3 are recognized.

4 MR. WHITMIRE: Okay. My name is Jordan
5 Whitmire, and I am an FPL customer residentially
6 and a partner in a small business that's also a FPL
7 customer.

8 I have been very happy with the service that
9 we have gotten from FPL. It has been very
10 reliable. And as a resident and business in a
11 coastal community, the amount of hardening of
12 infrastructure that FPL has been doing, I have been
13 extremely impressed with, and feel much more
14 comfortable seeing all that done prior to the next
15 storm events that may -- may hit us.

16 Also, as a landscape business, we have done
17 work for FPL on one of their solar projects, and I
18 was also impressed with how well they handled
19 themselves as a corporation and as a -- as a
20 business. They were reliable on the spot, good to
21 work with, and conscientious above all. Lots of
22 effort into being conscientious about the neighbors
23 that were around there, and going above and beyond
24 what they needed to do by providing landscape
25 buffers to the residential areas that were across

1 from the solar field, which they did not have to
2 do.

3 So the -- the support of the local businesses
4 is an important thing. Obviously, we were very
5 happy that they were willing to work with the local
6 businesses when they could have brought people in
7 from other areas.

8 And so as far as the rate increase goes, I
9 would support the FPL rate increase, but if FPL
10 gets a rate increase, one of the things I think
11 they really need to be conscientious about is that
12 the money aside for people who are in financial
13 hardships should be commensurate to whatever that
14 rate increase is so that that gap doesn't --
15 (inaudible) -- the help that FPL could provide to
16 people in need, and the amount of extra money, or
17 the amount of rate increase that those same people
18 would be people -- (inaudible) -- may be --
19 (inaudible) --

20 And the other thing is that a rate increase
21 also towards non-fossil fuels, which is critical
22 for Florida. We are a coastal state, tons of
23 coastal cities, and we are at the doorstep of
24 having the most impact from -- (inaudible) --
25 climate change from storm for sea level rise.

1 So I commend FPL for the amount of solar that
2 I have been seeing put in around the state, and
3 they should just be sure to use that rate increase
4 to highly fund the non-fossil fuel in this power
5 sources.

6 They've done a good job at protecting us with
7 providing reliable power and getting us up and
8 running after storm events. They still need to be
9 responsible in protecting us when it comes to
10 climate change.

11 So thanks for your time.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much for your
13 testimony today, Mr. Whitmire.

14 Any questions for Mr. Whitemire?

15 Commissioner Fay.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Just real quick, Mr. Whitmire, you are our
18 last speaker. I was just curious, can you hear the
19 bell that is being rung at the three-minute mark?

20 MR. WHITMIRE: Very faintly. And I recognized
21 what it was after about the 10th or 15th caller,
22 and then -- but, no, it needs to be louder.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Great, thank you so
24 much.

25 MR. WHITMIRE: You are welcome.

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We are ordering a bullhorn
2 tomorrow, a big air horn.

3 All right. That concludes all of our
4 scheduled speakers. Is there anyone that was on
5 the line that was overlooked or did not get an
6 opportunity to speak that was scheduled to speak?

7 All right. That's great news. We got them
8 all taken care of tonight.

9 Again, on behalf of the Commission, let me say
10 thank you to everyone that spent their evening on
11 hold for quite a bit of time to be able to speak
12 and to give their testimony. It is very important
13 to us to know and understand what the customers
14 think about the utility's quality of service, what
15 they think about the characteristics of service and
16 the rates that they are paying. We definitely
17 appreciate your input, and it will be taken into
18 consideration when we get to the technical and
19 evidence part of the hearing.

20 With no further business to be attended to
21 this, hearing stands adjourned.

22 Thank you so much.

23 (Proceedings concluded.)

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, DEBRA KRICK, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceeding was heard at the time and place herein stated.

IT IS FURTHER CERTIFIED that I stenographically reported the said proceedings; that the same has been transcribed under my direct supervision; and that this transcript constitutes a true transcription of my notes of said proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

DATED this 12th day of July, 2021.



DEBRA R. KRICK
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH31926
EXPIRES AUGUST 13, 2024