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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: COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA
COMMISSIONER GABRIELLA PASSIDOMO

DATE: Friday, July 2, 2021

TIME: Commenced: 10:00 a.m.
Concluded: 11:39 a.m.

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

REPORTED BY: ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY
Court Reporter

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

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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.
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16 American Citizens of Florida, and Environmental
17 Confederation of Southwest Florida.

18 THOMAS JERNIGAN, MAJOR HOLLY BUCHANAN, CAPTAIN
19 ROBERT FRIEDMAN, SERGEANT ARNOLD BRAXTON, EBONY PAYTON
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1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

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3 ESQUIRES, Moyle Law Firm, 118 North Gadsden Street,
4 Tallahassee, FL 32301, appearing on behalf of Florida
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6 JAMES W. BREW and LAURA W. BAKER, Stone Law
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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.

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1 APPEARANCES CONTINUED:

2 RICHARD GENTRY, PUBLIC COUNSEL; CHARLES
3 REHWINKEL, DEPUTY PUBLIC COUNSEL; PATRICIA A.
4 CHRISTENSEN and ANASTACIA PIRRELLO, ESQUIRES, OFFICE OF
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9 SUZANNE BROWNLESS, BIANCA LHERISSON, SHAW
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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.

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

2 COMMISSIONER FAY: Good morning. Welcome to
3 the Florida Power & Light/Gulf customer -- customer
4 hearing. I just want to first have staff read
5 the -- the notice.

6 MS. BROWNLESS: By notice issued on June 3rd
7 and 4th, 2021, this time and place has been set for
8 a customer service hearing in Docket No.
9 20210015-EI.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

11 I'm just going to give a quick overview of
12 the -- today's hearing. We will take some
13 information about the hearing process, have parties
14 make their appearances, and then provide opening
15 statements. And then we'll move into the customer-
16 testimony component of the -- the hearing.

17 I do want to go over a few quick things.
18 First, let me thank all the customers for taking
19 their time to be on the hearing today and provide
20 your input. It's a key component to the rate
21 process. We do appreciate your interest.

22 In addition to that, we have a Au- -- in
23 August, we have a technical hearing that the
24 Commission will take part in which will discuss and
25 provide the substance and evidence of the case at

1 that time.

2 I do want to make sure I give you some contact
3 information up front so you're able to reach either
4 the utility or our office, if -- if needed. If you
5 would like to reach FPL or Gulf customer service,
6 they have a representative available. The contact
7 number is (833)407-2007.

8 In our office, we have Curt Mouring, a member
9 of our accounting and finance division, along with
10 our -- our technical staff available. You can
11 e-mail him at cmouring@psc.state.fl.us. It's
12 c-m-o-u-r-n-i-n-g [sic]. You can also reach our
13 office, (850)413-6427.

14 Just a quick point, this is an official
15 hearing and will be tran- -- transcribed as part of
16 the record, so your comments will be subject to a
17 potential cross-examination.

18 Will that, I'll move into the appearances for
19 the parties. Florida Power & Light.

20 MS. BARNES: Good morning. Monica Barnes
21 appearing on behalf of Florida Power & Light
22 Company. I'd also like to enter an appearance for
23 Russell Badders and Wade Litchfield.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.
25 Office of Public Counsel.

1 MS. WESSLING: Good morning. This is Mary
2 Wessling, and I'm with the Office of Public
3 Counsel. I would also like to enter an appearance
4 on behalf of Richard Gentry, the Public Counsel,
5 Charles Rehwinkel, Patricia Christensen, and
6 Anastacia Pirrello. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much.
8 Florida Rising.

9 MR. LUEBKEMANN: Good morning,
10 Mr. Commissioner. This is Jordan Luebke
11 mann for Florida Rising, ECOSWF, and LULAC. I'd like to
12 also enter an appearance for Bradley Marshall and
13 Christina Reichert. Thanks.

14 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

15 FEA, FIPUG, SACE, or FRF?

16 Vote Solar?

17 MS. OTTENWELLER: Good morning. This is Katie
18 Chiles Ottenweller for Vote Solar, and I'd also
19 like to enter an appearance for Bill Garner with
20 the CLEO Institute. Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much,
22 Ms. Ottenweller.

23 Next is the Larsons.

24 MR. SKOP: Yes, good morning, Commissioner
25 Fay. Nathan Skop entering an appearance on behalf

1 of Daniel and Alexandria Larson. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

3 FAIR.

4 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.

5 Good morning. Robert Scheffel Wright appearing on
6 behalf of Floridians Against Increased Rates, Inc.
7 I'd like to enter an appearance for my law partner,
8 John Thomas LaVia, III. Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much.
10 We'll move to staff.

11 MS. BROWNLESS: Yes, sir. Good morning. My
12 name is Suzanne Brownless here on behalf of
13 Commission staff. And I'd also like to enter an
14 appearance for Bianca Lherisson and Shaw Stiller.

15 MS. CIBULA: Samantha Cibula, advisor to the
16 Commission. And I would also like to make an
17 appearance for Keith Hetrick, our General Counsel.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much.
19 With that, we'll move to the parties' opening
20 statements. We'll start with Florida Power &
21 Light.

22 MS. BARNES: Thank you, Commissioner.
23 Christopher Chapel, vice president of customer
24 service, will provide opening remarks on behalf of
25 FPL, followed by brief remarks in Spanish by Rosa

1 Prieto.

2 MR. CHAPEL: Thank you, Monica, and thank you,
3 Commissioner Fay, and thank you to all of our
4 customers who have taken the time to be with us
5 today.

6 Before I begin, I'd like to extend our
7 thoughts and prayers to the families affected by
8 the horrible tragedy in Surfside, Miami. At times
9 like this we are reminded that our customers are
10 our friends, our neighbors, and our families. Our
11 hearts are broken.

12 We're also keeping a close eye on the tropics
13 today. At this point, it's unclear if or how
14 Hurricane Elsa will impact Florida. We are
15 monitoring the storm and we want to assure our
16 customers that, as ever, we have a plan and we are
17 ready. We urge our customers to also monitor the
18 storm and to make a plan.

19 As Monica said, my name is Christopher Chapel
20 and I'm the vice president of customer service for
21 FPL. FPL is a regulated energy company. This
22 means the Public Service Commission oversees our
23 rates and operations to ensure we deliver safe and
24 reliable service at fair prices.

25 We're here today because we're asking for new

1 base rates beginning in 2022. I'm extremely proud
2 to be a part of the team that provides you with
3 America's best energy value, electricity that's not
4 just clean and reliable, but also affordable.

5 That doesn't mean that we can't be better,
6 which is why your feedback today is so important to
7 us. Fundamentally, our mission is to provide you
8 with excellent service at affordable rates. Your
9 electricity is cleaner and more reliable than ever.
10 It's also affordable.

11 The rates you pay are well-below the national
12 average. Our typical residential customer bill is
13 lower today than it was 15 years ago. This is the
14 result of FPL's consistent and deliberate effort to
15 continuously improve on our performance and the
16 value we provide our customers.

17 It's a purposeful and never-ending commitment
18 to be the best utility possible. And this is at
19 the very heart of our rate request. We're standing
20 by our proven track record and promising an even
21 better tomorrow, a more resilient and sustainable
22 energy future that all of us can depend on.

23 Our smart investments have ini- -- increased
24 generation efficiency and dramatically improved
25 reliability. In fact, we've been the most-reliable

1 utility in Florida for the last 15 years, and we've
2 improved our storm preparedness and mobilization.
3 As a result, we've dramatically improved our
4 restoration times, but it's been five years since
5 our last rate request.

6 Florida is now the country's third-largest
7 state and the world's 17th-largest economy. FPL
8 has grown, too. We now serve more than 11 million
9 Floridians. And though we've invested billions of
10 dollars every year to support Florida's growth and
11 to continuously improve your service, many of these
12 investment are not included in current rates.

13 So, we've asked the PSC to approve a plan that
14 would phase in new rates in 2022. Please keep in
15 mind that the proposed increase is spread across
16 millions of customers and over a four-year period.
17 So, even with the proposed rate increase, typical
18 residential bills will continue to remain well-
19 below the national average.

20 And, importantly, the plan will allow us to
21 continue to make proven investments in
22 infrastructure, clean energy, and technologies that
23 benefit our customers and our growing state.

24 While we work hard every day to keep bills
25 low, we also recognize that some of our customers

1 face challenges. To this end, we've partnered with
2 dozens of assistance agencies to distribute LIHEAP
3 and Care to Share funding to help customers who are
4 struggling to pay their bills.

5 And during the COVID pandemic, we received
6 approval from the PSC to create a number of unique
7 programs that provided approximately \$75 million in
8 assistance to customers.

9 As we always have and always will, we are here
10 to support our customers. In fact, as Commissioner
11 Fay said, we have employees right now to help. You
12 can contact them at (833)407-2007.

13 In closing, we are committed to serving you
14 today while always looking over the horizon, so
15 we're ready to meet your energy needs tomorrow.
16 We're looking forward to hearing from you. We want
17 to hear what we do well.

18 To that end, we've asked customers who've said
19 they value our service to share their thoughts
20 today, but more importantly, we want to know where
21 we can improve. So, thank you for your
22 participation, and thank you for the opportunity to
23 serve you.

24 One last note. Given that this is our last
25 hearing, I would like to take a moment to thank the

1 Commission staff and everyone who's pulled these
2 hearings together. It's a been a remarkable feat
3 over these last two weeks.

4 I'd now like to turn it over Rosie Prieto, our
5 senior director of customer care, to welcome our
6 Spanish-speaking customers.

7 MS. PRIETO: Thank you, Christopher.

8 (Addressing the customers in Spanish.)

9 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you, Rosa.
10 Office of Public Counsel.

11 MS. WESSLING: Yes, thank you and good
12 morning. This is Mary Wessling. I'm with the
13 Office of Public Counsel. We are an office within
14 the Legislature set up to represent you, the
15 ratepayers of Florida Power & Light and Gulf.

16 We are investigating the Florida Power & Light
17 and Gulf rate request in this matter. To help us,
18 we have hired experts in accounting, depreciation,
19 cost of capital, and other regulatory matters. We
20 will try to get the best rate for you, the
21 customers, that we can.

22 Today we are here in order to hear from you,
23 the customers, about your experiences with Florida
24 Power & Light and Gulf, whether those are good or
25 bad. We thank you for taking the time to attend

1 this hearing and give your input. Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you,
3 Ms. Wessling.

4 Florida Rising.

5 MR. LUEBKEMANN: Thank you, Mr. Commissioner.
6 Good morning. My name is Jordan Luebkekmann, and I
7 represent Florida Rising, the League of United
8 Latin American Citizens of Florida and the
9 Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida in
10 this proceeding.

11 These organizations have missions spanning
12 environmental conservation, economic and civil
13 rights, and environmental and climate justice, but
14 all three are in this case to oppose FPL's attempt
15 to raise rates by 20 percent.

16 This rate increase is completely unnecessary
17 to provide for grid reliability. Instead, the hike
18 allows FPL to increase their profits and pay for
19 unneeded fossil-fuel gas plants and overbuilt
20 transmission-line upgrades, among other needless
21 expenses.

22 We have been listening and know that many of
23 you have noticed service crews working on your
24 storm-hardening -- on storm-hardening your
25 transmission lines and restoring power after

1 hurricanes. Those activities are not paid from the
2 \$6.5 billion in additional rates that FPL is
3 seeking in this docket. FPL doesn't need to charge
4 you one cent more to pay for that work.

5 We've also heard that you, like us, understand
6 the need to swiftly develop clean energy in
7 Florida, but again, FPL could build all the solar
8 the state needs right now without raising rates.

9 When -- finally, when FPL boasts about its
10 customer service and reliability, it's important to
11 remember that it also disconnected half a million
12 households during the pandemic for not being able
13 to keep up with their bills. What's reliability if
14 you can't afford to keep the lights on?

15 Raising rates by another 20 percent will
16 ensure many more Floridians will struggle with
17 their bills. That's why we will be asking that
18 FPL's rate hike be denied.

19 Thank you to all the customers who have made
20 your time -- made the time to share your experience
21 today, and thank you very much to the Commission
22 and staff for facilitating these -- these service
23 hearings. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you, Florida
25 Rising.

1 Vote Solar and CLEO.

2 MS. OTTENWELLER: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.

3 Good morning. My name is Katie Chiles
4 Ottenweller and I'm here on behalf of the CLEO
5 Institute and Vote Solar. We're two non-profit
6 organizations working towards an affordable, clean,
7 equitable, and resilient energy system that works
8 for all Floridians, especially those who are the
9 most-vulnerable.

10 In the past year, Floridians faced a global
11 pandemic, economic recession, and record-breaking
12 hurricanes worsened by climate change. While FPL
13 profits increased by 10 percent last year, FPL and
14 Gulf decided to disconnect 558,691 homes from power
15 due to late payment during the pandemic, at a
16 higher rate than any other Florida utility. We
17 believe that clean energy solutions exist that can
18 better protect families struggling to pay their
19 bills.

20 We thank you so much for calling in. We know
21 you have a lot going on and we want you to know
22 that we're listening and we appreciate you taking
23 the time. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you,
25 Ms. Ottenweller.

1 The Larsons.

2 MR. SKOP: Yes, thank you, Commissioner Fay.

3 Good morning. My name is Nathan Skop. As an
4 attorney and former Florida Public Service
5 Commission Commissioner, it's my privilege to
6 represent the Larsons in the FPL rate case. The
7 Larsons are FPL residential customers living in
8 Palm Beach County who are very concerned about the
9 significant rate impact of the proposed FPL rate
10 increase.

11 While FPL projects its rate increase is
12 averaged over four years, the truth of the matter
13 is it's front-loaded and, for FPL customers,
14 residential customers, av- -- the first year would
15 be \$10.60 cents per month in FY '22. That's a
16 significant rate increase.

17 The FPL rate increase represents the largest
18 electric-rate increase in Florida's history. FPL
19 has the burden to demonstrate that the request is
20 fair, just, and reasonable.

21 While FPL should be allowed to recover the
22 prudent additions made to rate base since the last
23 rate request and settlement, whether that
24 require- -- whether that requires a rate increase
25 is a matter to be determined.

1 It's important to understand, however, that
2 FPL's claims about having lower bills than other
3 electric utilities does not provide the legal basis
4 for the Florida Public Service Commission to
5 increase rates. Likewise, making comparisons to 15
6 years ago is equally misleading because it provides
7 a snapshot in time at a convenient point where you
8 can make a comparison that may not be true a year
9 later.

10 Furthermore, having -- you know, FPL's claims
11 about reliable service -- again, having reliable
12 service is expected from a regulated utility under
13 the regulatory compact.

14 In 2009, the Florida Public Service Commission
15 denied the majority of FPL's \$1.3 billion rate
16 increase, which was, at that time, the largest in
17 Florida's history. FPL claimed that its
18 reliability and investment -- ability to make
19 investments would be impacted if this rate increase
20 was not granted in 2009. And nothing could be
21 further from the truth.

22 Less than a month later, they raised a billion
23 dollars in capital at attractive rates and they
24 raised their corporate dividends. So, that
25 certainly was not a company in financial distress.

1 So, again, rate cases are all about posturing.

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

7 As an illustrative example, the return on
8 equity is one of the many hotly-contested issues in
9 the FPL rate case. In the FPL rate case, FPL has
10 requested a mid-point ROE of 11.5 percent. FPL has
11 a very strong balance sheet and is financially
12 healthy.

13 In contrast to the FPL request, on May 4th,
14 the Florida Public Service Commission approved
15 Duke -- the Duke rate case settlement with a mid-
16 point ROE of 9.85. That set a new benchmark for
17 Florida electric investor-owned utilities.

18 With a much stronger balance sheet than Duke,
19 it's difficult to understand how FPL could justify
20 a mid-point ROE that is 165 basis points above the
21 ROE benchmark that was recently approved by the
22 Florida Public Service Commission on May 4th.

23 The Larsons are also deeply concerned about
24 media reports about the influence that investor-
25 owned utilities such as FPL are alleged to have

1 over the Florida Public Service Commission and
2 Florida -- and the Florida Legislature.

3 In closing, the Larsons are hopeful that the
4 time and expense of the fully-litigated rate case,
5 which require the Florida Public Service Commission
6 to decide the rate case, could be avoided and that
7 a fair and reasonable settlement could be reached
8 between the parties that would balance the
9 interests of customers and FPL alike.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Skop.

12 Next up, Mr. Wright with FAIR.

13 MR. WRIGHT: Thank you, Chairman Fay, and good
14 morning.

15 Before I begin, I want to add my prayers to
16 those of everyone who are praying for those in
17 Surfside. It's a terrible tragedy and we pray for
18 their peace and comfort.

19 My name is Robert Scheffel Wright. I go by
20 Schef. I was born in Miami, and I have worked on
21 energy matters here in Florida for more than 40
22 years, including service in Governor Bob Graham's
23 energy office and seven years on the staff of the
24 Florida Public Service Commission.

25 This morning, I have -- have the privilege and

1 am proud to represent Floridians Against Increased
2 Rates, Inc., a Florida non-profit corporation, and
3 our hundreds of FPL customers who are among our
4 members.

5 On behalf of FAIR, I thank you for being here
6 today and participating in this hearing. I want to
7 be clear about this from the outset. From the
8 viewpoint of customers, FPL's customers, all
9 utility customers, FAIR wants a healthy FPL. Our
10 position is simply that FPL should have enough
11 money to do its job, not too much.

12 It is FPL's duty and responsibility, it is
13 FPL's job, to provide safe and reliable service at
14 the lowest possible cost. FPL has thousands of
15 good, hardworking people out there keeping the
16 lights on. We salute them and they should get
17 paid, and they will; however, the evidence in this
18 case will show that FPL's request -- which, by the
19 way, is by far the largest in Florida history --
20 would give FPL way more money than it needs to do
21 its job.

22 FPL's request is unreasonable and it is
23 unfair. It is unfair because FPL does not need the
24 extra \$1.1 billion of your money next year to do
25 its job. They don't need what they've asked for in

1 2023, '24, and '25 either.

2 Even if FPL got no base-rate increase at all,
3 as they're asking for, they could pay all their
4 expenses, pay all their labor expenses, all their
5 workers, all their projected storm-preparation and
6 protection costs, storm-hardening costs, any storm-
7 restoration costs, should there be a storm, cover
8 all their interests, and recover all the costs with
9 their existing and projected investments for next
10 year and still have well over \$2 billion less --
11 left over.

12 While FPL's current rates did not include some
13 investments when those rates were established four
14 years ago, that doesn't mean they're not fully
15 covered. FPL's revenues and sales have grown
16 dramatically. They have grown so much that all
17 their costs are covered, including the cost of
18 these new investments. And FPL has earned at the
19 very top of its authorized range for the last three
20 years.

21 And it's even worse than that, customers. FPL
22 wants to take value that your payments will create
23 into using what they call a depreciation
24 amortization reserve surplus to pad their profits
25 even further. Your payments will create this

1 surplus. They want to be able to use up to a
2 billion-and-a-half dollars worth of your created
3 value to pad their profits over the next four
4 years.

5 FAIR and our witnesses have provided detailed,
6 powerful evidence that demonstrate FPL does not
7 need a rate increase. We will work hard and
8 diligently to prevent them from getting anything
9 they don't need. We want them to have what they
10 need; we don't want them to have any more than
11 that.

12 Tell the Commissioners what you think. Thank
13 you for your participation this morning, and thank
14 you for your attention.

15 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you,
16 Mr. Wright.

17 The next portion of the hearing, we will move
18 into the customer -- customer-testimony part. I --
19 I do apologize. This -- this will be a long
20 meeting, but we are going to make sure everyone has
21 the opportunity to speak today.

22 And each customer will have three minutes to
23 speak and -- and will be notified by -- you just
24 heard from that previous speaker, at the three-
25 minute mark, you'll hear that bell. And that's

1 just to notify you that -- that your time is up.
2 And we'll give you a few seconds to close, but
3 you'll need to finish at that -- that point in
4 time.

5 There's a few just things we want to mention
6 about being on the phone. Please make sure that
7 your phone is on mute when you are not speaking, as
8 we can get feedback on some of these calls. In the
9 past, we've had that -- that issue.

10 If your line is not muted and we have feedback
11 or noise coming through where we cannot hear the
12 other speaker, our technical staff will disconnect
13 you and you'll need to con- -- call back in and
14 make sure your phone is on mute at that time.

15 Please do not use the speakerphone function.
16 And if you do -- if you are either disconnected or
17 have to dial back in, please wait until the end of
18 the call and we will go back and make sure that you
19 have the opportunity to speak at the end of the
20 list, but please do not interrupt the other callers
21 when you get back on the line so we can finish
22 their -- their three minutes of testimony before
23 moving on to yours. So, we -- we won't miss you.
24 We'll come back to you at the end.

25 Keep in mind the professional nature of -- of

1 these calls and that -- the hearing today; we
2 appreciate your patience with that.

3 And finally, just -- if you -- if you do have
4 some additional comments, the Commission will be
5 taking information into the record through a number
6 of different ways, including these public hearings,
7 which includes providing them by mail or e-mail, if
8 you feel that you want to do so that way. We just
9 want to make sure you feel as comfortable as
10 possible to submit those -- those comments.

11 And just, finally, we do have a Spanish-
12 speaking interpreter on the line today. If -- if
13 she -- she is needed, please let us know and we'll
14 make sure she can translate for us.

15 Next, I'll just make sure the -- the order is
16 clear, so I'll call your name when you're ready to
17 speak, but I will provide three names up front,
18 just so you're able to know where you are next in
19 line, and prepare to be -- be up next for that
20 calling.

21 And, finally, there are a few individuals that
22 we'll need to swear in. If you submitted your form
23 online, you're already sworn in, and presume that
24 you are otherwise, unless I -- I tell you that
25 you're not and we'll -- we'll get you sworn in at

1 that time.

2 To start, we -- the first three will be
3 Zelalem Adefris, Priscilla Chanfrau, and Arif
4 Sarwat.

5 Zelalem Adefris, are you on the line?

6 MS. ADEFRIS: Hi. Yes, I'm here. Can you
7 hear me?

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yes, we can hear you.
9 You're recognized.

10 MS. ADEFRIS: Great. My name is Zelalem
11 Adefris. I'm a resident of Miami Beach and I work
12 at Catalyst Miami, which is an anti-poverty non-
13 profit serving low-wealth households across Miami-
14 Dade County, Florida.

15 We are deeply opposed to a rate increase by
16 Florida Power & Light. This increase, which totals
17 almost 20 percent, comes just as households are
18 just starting to recover from the economic impacts
19 of the COVID-19 pandemic where, I will remind you,
20 around half a million FPL customers defaulted on
21 their electric bills -- actually, I think the
22 number is around 650,000. A rate-hike proposal at
23 this time feels heartless and insensitive with so
24 many in our communities still struggling.

25 As you all know, in addition, we're facing a

1 global climate crisis. Our state is one of the
2 most-vulnerable places in the world to stronger
3 storms, extreme heat, sea-level rise, et cetera.
4 We must do our part to address this crisis, and FPL
5 is not.

6 While this rate increase does include solar
7 panels, it is also asking for 11.5 percent ROI
8 [sic], unnecessary new transmission infrastructure,
9 and new gas infrastructure. This is the opposite
10 of what we need.

11 You know, in my opinion, what we need is a
12 moratorium on new fossil-fuel-based infrastructure
13 and as well as a retirement plan for all the old
14 infrastructure as we -- as we transition to
15 renewables.

16 I speak today on behalf of all the households
17 that are struggling to survive and all the
18 generations that are going to come after, that want
19 to continue to count on Florida.

20 As the largest utility in the state, FPL needs
21 to do its part. There should be no rate increases
22 for dirty fossil-fuel infrastructure after one of
23 the greatest economic, environmental, and public
24 health crises in world history. It's completely
25 inappropriate, and I ask that the Public Service

1 Commission does not accept this rate hike.

2 Instead, please have some compassion and focus
3 on what our community needs: affordable renewable
4 energy, household energy-efficiency programs, of
5 which FPL proposed to do almost nothing for, as
6 their goal in the last FEECA hearing.

7 It's so critical, energy efficiency, because,
8 even if rates do go up, they're -- it -- they
9 wouldn't be disproportionately impacting people
10 just because they live in poorer housing stock and
11 have lower incomes.

12 Anyways, you've heard from many voices this
13 past week, I'm sure, in these hearings, but let's
14 keep in mind there are so many more that haven't
15 been heard. So many of the community members we
16 work with at our organization that would be
17 adversely impacted by this rate increase don't have
18 the luxury to take off work or caring for family
19 members to log on to these hearings and make their
20 case. Please do keep that in mind and do take into
21 heavy consideration the written comments as you
22 make your decision.

23 Thank you so much for the time.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
25 comments.

1 Next up is Priscilla Chanfrau. Priscilla --
2 Priscilla Chanfrau.

3 Arif Sarwat. Arif Sarwat.

4 Next three up will be Jason Liechty, Vincent
5 Cuomo, and Jennifer Drake.

6 Mr. Liechty, are you on the line? Jason
7 Liechty.

8 Vincent Cuomo?

9 MR. CUOMO: I am here.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Cuomo, you're
11 recognized.

12 MR. CUOMO: Thank you. Thank you, everybody,
13 for allowing me to speak. I just want to say I --
14 I am just a customer of FP&L. I don't have a play
15 in this or I work for a company that's, you know,
16 opposing this or I don't work for FP&L, and I don't
17 have any family members that work for FP&L. I'm
18 just a customer.

19 My -- good morning. My name is Vincent Cuomo.
20 I live at 16184 76th Trail North in Palm Beach
21 Gardens, Florida 33418. Again, like I stated, I am
22 an FP&L customer. I've asked to speak to you so I
23 can tell you my experiences and what I personally
24 believe about FP&L.

25 I have lived in Jupiter since 1987. I have

1 been a homeowner since 1998, and I have built five
2 homes. So, as you know, when you build homes
3 there's a lot of working directly, not just with
4 other contractors, but with FP&L. I have been
5 nothing but extremely satisfied with my service
6 from FP&L.

7 They've provided me, my family, and my
8 extended family, my friends, and my clients top-
9 notch service that -- I believe.

10 Compare that to the other major companies that
11 we all have to deal with as a major homeowner --
12 Comcast, AT&T, any major bank, et cetera -- you get
13 my drift. They're all known to have personal
14 issue- -- we -- we all are known to have personal
15 issues with each and every one of those companies
16 and their competitors.

17 Now, you're not going to please everybody out
18 there, but what I would say is that the majority of
19 residents, and the ones that I speak to, are all
20 happy with FP&L. That can't be said for those
21 other companies that I just spoke about and their
22 competitors.

23 As for forward-thinking and caring for its
24 clients and concerns of its clients, FP&L is one of
25 the more-aggressive of the national power

1 companies. You know, they've been moving their
2 energy generation away from more-polluting methods
3 and more towards carbon-neutral methods, which is a
4 very important thing for me and my family and -- as
5 I have two children and I think about the future.

6 They have increased their solar presence, and
7 I would say they're one of the leaders in that
8 space. They recently removed -- and I saw it on
9 the news -- removed their last coal-fired plant,
10 which I was very excited about.

11 And let's talk about what they're doing with
12 their number one nemesis, hurricanes. When they
13 have to deal with this yearly issue, they have
14 significantly increased their response and
15 restoration time, as I've been through three major
16 hurricanes in this area and seen their progress as
17 they move forward. They're hardening their lines
18 and I see the guys out working doing it all the
19 time. And we've seen this over the last five
20 years.

21 Lastly, I think you need to evalu- -- what I
22 do is I -- when I'm evaluating any company, I
23 evaluate the company to its competitors. And I
24 think that's what you guys should do also. And I
25 think FP&L is a true leader in the industry.

1 Let's take the four biggest states, Florida's
2 being one of those, let -- let's take that as a
3 comparison and it should make sense. California --
4 do we even have to talk about the PG&E and the fact
5 that they can't control their energy demands and
6 have to do rolling outages, let alone a company
7 that, in 2019, was completely at fault and pleaded
8 guilty in court for the deaths of 84 residents,
9 153 acres --

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Cuomo. Mr. Cuomo.

11 MR. CUOMO: Yes?

12 COMMISSIONER FAY: I'm going to need you to
13 wrap up your comments, please. Thank you.

14 MS. CUOMO: I'm sorry?

15 COMMISSIONER FAY: I'm going to need you to
16 wrap up your comments.

17 MR. CUOMO: Oh, okay.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: You've gone over your three
19 minutes.

20 MR. CUOMO: So, between Texas -- yes, between
21 Texas, California, and New York, the three major
22 energy companies, you can see what they've done
23 compared to FP&L. We've never been in that
24 situation.

25 And I just want to say that FP&L -- I've been

1 very satisfied with them. My family is very
2 satisfied with them, and that is why I wanted to
3 ask to come on here and speak about supporting
4 their increase.

5 Thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you for your
7 comments, Mr. Cuomo.

8 Jennifer Drake.

9 MS. DRAKE: Yes, I'm here. My name is
10 Jennifer Drake.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Ms. Drake --

12 MS. DRAKE: As -- I'm sorry? Hello?

13 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized,
14 Ms. Drake. Go ahead.

15 MS. DRAKE: Oh, thank you. My name is
16 Jennifer Drake. I live in Plantation, Florida. I
17 work in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I've been a FPL
18 customer since 1987, and over all of those years,
19 I've seen FPL service continue to improve and their
20 reliability to also greatly improve.

21 When I first moved here from Tennessee, who
22 also had good system through TVA, I was surprised
23 that the rates were comparable because I'd always
24 heard the -- that it was, like, way overpriced.
25 And we -- we find it to be very reasonable.

1 We also have found that FPL is continually
2 working to harden their system against hurricanes.
3 If you have a problem -- I moved -- we moved to a
4 new home. We were having continual power surges.
5 And, I mean, they were -- there were a lot.

6 So, we called FPL. We got ahold of a
7 gentleman. He got his manager involved. They told
8 us that, with their computer technology, they
9 should be able to figure out what was wrong;
10 although, that -- they had a hard time believing we
11 were having so many power surges.

12 He gets back to us within a couple of days.
13 He said the system showed that we were having a
14 tremendous amount. They ended up tracking down the
15 issue within two weeks. And, for the next three
16 months, he would reach out to us to give us a
17 report and make sure everything was fine.

18 To me, that is excellent service. We have --
19 they -- I really appreciate their reliance on new
20 technology, their -- their transfer to solar
21 energy, and investing in that area and other clean
22 technologies, such as hybrid-electric generation.

23 I think that we are lucky to have FPL to
24 provide us such reliable and clean service, and I
25 think that we should support them as they continue

1 to do so.

2 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you for your
3 comments, Ms. Drake.

4 Next three will be John Cotugno, Natalie
5 Rivas, and Armando Llanes.

6 John Cotugno.

7 MR. COTUGNO: Yes, I'm here.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

9 MR. COTUGNO: My name is John Cotugno. I live
10 at -- on Fiddlewood Road in Vero Beach, 32963 zip
11 code. I'm responding here in -- as a customer of
12 FP&L. I moved back to Florida in 2017 to retire
13 after a business career. And I have direct
14 infor- -- you know, direct experience with a number
15 of different electric companies throughout my
16 career.

17 I have found the FP&L situation here has been
18 outstanding service and cu- -- customer care while
19 I've been here. They took over a municipal
20 electric company in Vero Beach since that -- just
21 as I was taking -- taking possession of my home,
22 but just in that short period of time, when the
23 municipal -- municipality delivered electric
24 service and FP&L taking over, you could see the
25 profound difference of quality, care,

1 responsiveness to questions that came up during
2 that transition.

3 And in comparison to other states I've lived
4 in -- and I've had direct experience with PG&E --
5 the quality of care, service, and -- and
6 reliability from the FP&L system here -- especially
7 here in Vero Beach -- it has been a profound
8 difference.

9 The other situation here that I am satisfied
10 with is that the -- FP&L is a progressive company
11 that -- that looks towards the future. Having come
12 from a business background, it's important to plan
13 for the future and not just live in the present.

14 I understand there are difficulties going on
15 throughout our country, and especially in Florida,
16 because of current situations, but you need to plan
17 for the future. Climate is changing, investments
18 need to be made, and the continued quality of
19 service here, I think, needs to be -- needs to
20 maintained here.

21 Right now, in my neighborhood, there has been
22 active work by FP&L in hardening the system for
23 hurricane. There's been -- Indian River County --
24 the county that I reside in -- it's been extensive
25 solar-panel deployment. There's been extensive

1 work in improving the system and -- and providing
2 smart meters, et cetera, et cetera, which is -- is
3 something that improves response time.

4 And our instance of several outages that
5 happen because of car accidents or -- or -- or just
6 badly-maintained prior -- that was prior by the --
7 prior municipality -- the outages were easy to --
8 were pinpointed by FP&L in a very reasonable period
9 of time. They reacted very strongly to them.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Cotugno? Mr. Cotugno.

11 MR. COTUGNO: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER FAY: We need you to wrap up your
13 comments.

14 MR. COTUGNO: Yes -- and they deployed the
15 service.

16 So, we're very -- very satisfied with the
17 service, with the response time, the ability to --
18 to access the customer service personnel that you
19 need.

20 Thank you for your time.

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Next is Natalie Rivas.

24 MS. RIVAS: Hi, I'm here. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

1 MS. RIVAS: My name is Natalie and I live in
2 Miami Beach, Florida, 33141, and I'm an FP&L
3 customer. I am here to urge you to reject the
4 proposal of the utility rate increase, as this
5 measure will disproportionately impact over 60
6 percent of Miami-Dade residents who are considered
7 poor or working poor.

8 We don't need the signs to read to know it's
9 getting hotter, even at night. What the science
10 does tell us is that, in South Florida, by 2050,
11 about half of the year will be considered dangerous
12 days, where it can feel like over 105 degrees.

13 As a staff member of a local non-profit that
14 works in amplifying climate literacy, I regularly
15 engage with people who are the least-responsible
16 for intensifying global warming, but are often
17 faced with the disproportionate burdens of a
18 warming planet.

19 In the women's empowerment group I lead, I
20 know one member of color who lost her husband,
21 brother, sister, and brother-in-law during the
22 pandemic. You might think that health issues that
23 impact communities of color have nothing to do with
24 the rate increases, but follow the thread.

25 Evidence shows a clear pattern of race being

1 the number-one predictor of proximity to toxic air,
2 land, and water. And connect that to FPL getting
3 over 70 percent of its energy from fossil fuels
4 that, when burned, emit planet-warming
5 warming gasses, intensifying climate change, and
6 further pummel-- pummeling communities of color
7 with the brunt of pollution. This is a vicious
8 cycle.

9 I know of another Hispanic mom who talks to
10 her daughters about the potential of solar energy
11 in the future, but confides in me about her
12 neighbors facing high energy burdens with an
13 outside of their income going -- an outside portion
14 of their income going towards energy bills like
15 electricity due to hotter days and inefficient
16 access to cooling.

17 AC is essential to our lives -- and by AC, I
18 mean air conditioning. This is made evident during
19 the heat waves that are scorching the northwest
20 right now.

21 This energy and economic burden means
22 difficult tradeoff between paying bills -- a
23 challenge faced by likely over one million
24 Floridians -- and other necessities like food and
25 medical care. Floridians across the state are

1 still recovering from a pandemic that left most of
2 us in health and economic crisis-es.

3 And we're also preparing for an oncoming
4 hurricane season. Now is not the time for the
5 Public Service Commission to allow FPL to increase
6 its utility bills. Instead, FPL should take stock
7 of the needs of low-income customers and work
8 towards more energy-efficient goals.

9 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
11 comments.

12 Next is Armando Llanes.

13 MR. LLANES: Yes, Armando Llanes, 337 Corydon
14 Drive, in Miami Springs --

15 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Llanes -- Mr. Llanes, I
16 need to swear you in real quick before your
17 comments.

18 (Whereupon, Armando Llanes was sworn by
19 Commissioner Fay.)

20 MR. LLANES: Yes, I do.

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

22 MR. LLANES: Okay. What I was saying is -- my
23 connection might be a little difficult. I'm
24 actually going to be short. I want to use my three
25 minutes, as I'm picking up my father from

1 chemotherapy at Mount Sinai Hospital, and I need to
2 be quick, but I am in -- in support of allowing
3 Florida Power & Light for this increase.

4 I -- I think that we are all facing difficult
5 times, but I think the fact that, you know, quality
6 and dependability that Florida Power & Light brings
7 to all of us, it's -- it has a price and -- and we
8 have to -- to be able to realize that.

9 The -- the stuff -- for example, in Miami
10 Springs right now, they're doing underground wiring
11 for us to be safe in the future in case of a storm.
12 So, I -- I'm sorry that I'm being short, but I'm
13 being summoned to pick up my father.

14 I do approve and hope that the Commission
15 approves their request. Thank you so very much.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you for your
17 comments, Mr. Llanes.

18 The next three will be Patrick Chapman, Cinza
19 Iverson, and Angel Gonzalez.

20 Mr. Chapman, are you on the line? Patrick
21 Chapman?

22 Cinza Iverson, I'm going to need to swear you
23 in, if you're on the line. Cinza Iverson.

24 Angel Gonzalez. Angel Gonzalez.

25 Next three will be Carrie Roach, Nimesh Patel,

1 and Alice Lopez.

2 Carrie Roach, are you on the line? Carrie
3 Roach.

4 Nimesh Patel.

5 MR. PATEL: I'm here, sir.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Patel, you're
7 recognized.

8 MR. PATEL: All right. Thank you, sir.

9 My name is Nimesh Patel. I'm a Florida
10 resident and a business owner. I wanted to express
11 my gratitude and support for FP&L, not only as a
12 resident, but as a business owner who owns hotels
13 throughout the state.

14 My family and I own and operate hotels through
15 South Florida, but we also have businesses in
16 Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. I
17 can personally attest that it is cheaper to own and
18 operate hotels in Florida than Texas, Louisiana,
19 Mississippi, and Tennessee, and a large part of
20 that is due to FP&L and its affordable rates.

21 I'm thankful for F- -- FP&L for providing
22 clean, reliable energy at affordable rates,
23 thankful for -- thankful for FP&L to allowing us --
24 allowing us to have great customer service with
25 quick response times, especially during

1 emergencies.

2 We are always well-prepared for hurricanes.
3 We've had hotels that have been impacted in the
4 states of Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi. And,
5 unfortunately, we haven't had the service or the
6 response times that FP&L has provided.

7 I can also compare hotels throughout these
8 states and assure other residents and business
9 owners that it is significantly cheaper to own and
10 operate hotels in Florida.

11 I support FP&L and am willing to invest in
12 more to get better service and better results.
13 With an increase, it will still be cheaper for me
14 to live and operate my hotels in Florida than any
15 of the other -- other states that I've mentioned.

16 Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
18 comments, Mr. Patel.

19 Next is Alice Lopez.

20 MR. LOPEZ: Yes, I'm here. The information is
21 incorrect. It's Arnaldo Lopez.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: I'm sorry? Is -- who is
23 this?

24 MR. LOPEZ: Arnaldo, A-r-n-a-l-d-o. It says
25 Alice for some reason on my e-mail as well.

1 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. And what's your last
2 name?

3 MR. LOPEZ: Lopez, L-o-p-e-z.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. You're recognized,
5 Mr. Lopez. My apologies.

6 MR. LOPEZ: No worries.

7 So, I'll be brief as well. I completely
8 support the rate increase. I've been a customer of
9 FPL for many years. I live in Coral Gables,
10 Florida, and I own a couple of dental offices
11 through South Florida.

12 In 2016, when I opened my first practice, the
13 only thing really holding me up was a power issue,
14 and FPL really rose to the occasion, helped me save
15 tens of thousands of dollars by getting my -- my
16 practice up and running. And the service has been
17 efficient and delightful ever since.

18 I think that they do a spectacular job of
19 helping us through our tumultuous hurricane
20 seasons, and I completely support the increase.

21 Thank you.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
23 comments.

24 The next three been Todd Baer, Drew Martin,
25 and Luz Weinberg.

1 Mr. Baer, are you on the line?

2 MS. WEINBERG: Yes, this is Luz Weinberg.

3 Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

5 MS. WEINBERG: Thank you so much. Good
6 morning. My name is Luz Weinberg. I'm a former
7 commissioner of the City of Aventura in Miami-Dade
8 County. I'm also --

9 COMMISSIONER FAY: Ms. -- Ms. Weinberg.
10 Ms. --

11 MS. WEINBERG: Yes?

12 COMMISSIONER FAY: -- Weinberg, hold on one
13 second. We have some -- some folks in front of
14 you. Let me just make sure they're not on the
15 line.

16 So, Todd Baer?

17 Drew Martin? Drew Martin?

18 Okay. Ms. Weinberg, I'm going to swear you in
19 real quick before your testimony.

20 (Whereupon, Luz Weinberg was sworn by
21 Commissioner Fay.)

22 MS. WEINBERG: Yes, I do.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: You are recognized.

24 MS. WEINBERG: Thank you. Good morning. My
25 name is Luz Weinberg, a former commissioner in the

1 City of Aventura in Miami-Dade County. I am CEO of
2 Globcom, my communications firm specializing in
3 large-scale heavy civil-construction projects,
4 impact-mitigation strategies.

5 I -- I wanted to address this honorable board
6 today to talk about my experience with Florida
7 Power & Light in both the public and private sector
8 of my roles.

9 I've been in construction now for over ten
10 years and I have managed various different
11 utilities on various projects, not only here in
12 Florida, but across the U.S. FPL staff is always
13 professional and courteous and attentive to the
14 needs of my Florida projects, and that included the
15 billion-dollar Port of Miami Tunnel, my nine-acre
16 mixed-use Brickell City Center in downtown Miami,
17 and currently 12-acre luxury outdoor retail and
18 entertainment space, Esplanade at Aventura, by
19 Seritage Growth Properties, which is on the former
20 Sears Aventura site.

21 From 2005 to 2014, when I was the City of
22 Aventura city commissioner and vice mayor, I often
23 dealt with FPL. And they've always consistently
24 been reliably responsive to my city needs, and even
25 more so after the Hurricane Katrina and Wilma. At

1 that time, I was PR director for Aventura Hospital
2 and FPL had us up and operational immediately after
3 the storms.

4 I've always been impressed by their service.
5 And that's thanks to their numerous investments in
6 the electric system. All of my projects have
7 always enjoyed reliable acc- -- and accessible
8 power on sites during our construction and, once
9 open, FPL engineers continued to work extremely
10 well with my teams.

11 Again, I can mention very responsive. Not
12 only do they identify potential issues ahead of
13 time, but they also identify solutions to ensure
14 that all of my jobs continue on schedule and
15 ultimately on budget, which is like magic in
16 construction -- magic words in a construction
17 industry: on time, on budget.

18 I recently read that FPL had decreased their
19 bills about 10 percent over the last 15 years and
20 that's while simultaneously reducing carbon
21 emissions to about 30-percent cleaner than the
22 average utilities. And my brain was very impressed
23 with that one, but not surprised.

24 I'm very encouraged by the work FPL has done
25 to make Florida an even better place to do

1 business, and my businesses appreciate FPL. I
2 appreciate FPL, and I appreciate this board and the
3 work that you guys do.

4 So, thank you so much for the opportunity to
5 speak and express my feelings.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
7 comments.

8 The next three will be Duane Hoppe, Greg
9 Schutte, and Sharleen Schutte.

10 Mr. Hoppe, I'll need to swear you in, if
11 you're on the line.

12 MR. HOPPE: I'm on the line.

13 (Whereupon, Duane Hoppe was sworn by
14 Commissioner Fay.)

15 MR. HOPPE: Yes, it is.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

17 MR. HOPPE: Hi, my name is Duane Hoppe. I'm
18 the director of facilities for Piper Aircraft,
19 Inc., in Vero Beach. I'm also a customer of FP&L
20 at my home.

21 Mine's going to be short as well. I can't say
22 anything more than how FP&L has treated our
23 business. They're responsive. They're dedicated.
24 We've experienced some -- several outages prior to
25 them taking over here in Vero Beach. Their

1 response time has been phenomenal.

2 It's important for us to have power to our
3 facilities to run our production. They are -- it's
4 just one call away. And I mean, within minutes,
5 they're here responding and on-site to provide me
6 the information I need to pass on to the 900
7 employees that we have working day to day.

8 I -- you know, nobody wants to see an
9 increase; however, I believe this increase is --
10 necessary. I think it's to move forward, to
11 provide us a more reliable power grid. You know,
12 their customer service is -- is just great. We've
13 seen a reduction in our costs over -- year after
14 year of more than \$300,000 here at Piper.

15 I've also seen a reduction of costs at my
16 house of more than a hundred dollars per month. To
17 me, a small increase for my home is -- is worth
18 the -- the newer technologies and advancement of
19 FP&L.

20 Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
22 comments.

23 Next will be Greg --

24 MR. SKOP: Mr. --

25 COMMISSIONER FAY: Greg --

1 MR. SKOP: Mr. Chair, if I may, I respectfully
2 have a question for the last speaker.

3 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yes, Mr. Skop.

4 MR. HOPPE: Go ahead.

5 MR. SKOP: Yes. Yes --

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Hoppe, are you still on
7 the line?

8 MR. HOPPE: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Go ahead.

10 MR. SKOP: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 I just wanted to clarify with the speaker --
12 you mentioned Piper. I'm a former Boeing engineer.

13 Is your view related to the increase -- are
14 you speaking on behalf of Piper or are you speaking
15 on behalf of you, as an individual FPL rate c- --
16 customer.

17 MR. HOPPE: I -- I'm speaking on -- myself, as
18 a customer, for my home. I am not speaking on
19 behalf of --

20 MR. SKOP: Okay. Not on --

21 MR. HOPPE: -- Piper Aircraft. No.

22 MR. SKOP: Okay. All right. Thank you.
23 Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

25 Next up is Greg Schutte. Greg Schutte.

1 Sharleen Schutte. Sharleen Schutte.

2 Okay. Next three will be James Arnau, Carrie
3 Ann Graziano, and Melissa Manwah.

4 James Arnau, are you on the line. James
5 Arnau?

6 Carrie Ann Graziano. Carrie Ann Graziano.

7 Melissa Manwah. Melissa Manwah.

8 The next three will be Oscar Varona, Norman
9 Braunstein, and Justin Sobol.

10 Oscar Varona, are you on the line?

11 MR. VARONA: Yes, I am.

12 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Oscar Varona, you're
13 recognized.

14 MR. VARONA: Okay. Just a few words from what
15 everybody else has said. I am a FPL customer, both
16 on a personal and business basis. I've been living
17 here all my life, practically, since 1961. I am
18 very happy with the services that FPL has provided
19 over the years, very appreciative of their response
20 times, especially during times of emergencies, such
21 as hurricanes, et cetera. I take -- think and --
22 and my opinion is they do an incredible and awesome
23 job.

24 You know, from everything that I hear and read
25 from other states, I think, as far as the service

1 and cost that other people are paying, we're very
2 blessed to be living here in South Florida -- or in
3 Florida, in general, and having FPL as our service
4 provider.

5 That said, at the same time, we are giving --
6 living in difficult times for many, many people. I
7 think a 20-percent increase is a pretty hefty
8 increase. Again, if -- I'm not a big fan of trying
9 to -- there's one thing as far as having some sort
10 of plan for future costs due to unexpected
11 emergencies, but if we have -- if FPL has those
12 savings and those -- and those things set aside for
13 those, just having an additional 20-percent
14 increase to just increase the profit margin or just
15 for something that may or may not happen in the
16 next ten years, I think, is kind of excessive,
17 especially during these times. I think that that's
18 something that needs to be reconsidered, and
19 readjusted and rethought out as to what actually is
20 needed instead of wanted.

21 And that's all I have to say.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much.

23 And I have Norman Braunstein, Justin Sobol,
24 and then Alan Fiers next.

25 Norman Braunstein? Norman Braunstein?

1 Justin Sobol.

2 MR. SOBOL: Present.

3 COMMISSIONER FAY: Justin Sobol.

4 MR. SOBOL: Present.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Sobol, you're
6 recognized. Mr. Sobol, you're recognized.

7 MR. SOBOL: Thank you. I would like to thank
8 the Commission for this opportunity to speak with
9 you and all of those on this call. I'm currently a
10 Brevard resident and have the pleasure of living in
11 the FPL service territory my entire life.

12 My entire career has been in the water and
13 power industries and it gives me a unique
14 understanding of utilities providing these
15 services. FPL is, by far, ahead of others in the
16 state and across the nation when it comes to
17 reliability and service they provide.

18 I'd like to start off by saying I'm extremely
19 satisfied with my service and commend FPL and the
20 Commission in their continued efforts to provide
21 quality service to the customers in terms of
22 customer service, reliability, clean energy, and
23 price, just to name a few.

24 Over the last 18 months, my wife and I have
25 both been working from home. I can honestly say

1 that I've had an increased respect and gratitude
2 for both FPL and the Commission by allowing me to
3 have the reliable electric service that I have for
4 the many hours of daily conference calls that I am
5 on.

6 As we stare down another potential storm, I'd
7 also like to thank the Commission and FPL for their
8 forethought in hardening the electrical system. I
9 know, just recently, you know, FPL installed some
10 automated meter switches. I will say that the --
11 the crews that were out there doing that work
12 were -- were extremely helpful, nice, responsive.
13 You know, I had many questions, being part of the
14 industry. And there's also been a number of new
15 poles, both on the transmission and distribution
16 side, in my community.

17 So, I can attest to the improved response- --
18 responsiveness and decreased time without service
19 after storms. I have been through many of them in
20 my life here in southeastern Florida. I hate to
21 admit how many, but there's -- there has been quite
22 a few.

23 I, again, want to take the opportunity to
24 express my gratitude to the Commission and to FPL
25 for providing me and my family with clean,

1 reliable, and reasonably-priced energy.

2 Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
4 comments.

5 Alan Fiers.

6 MR. FIERS: Yeah, I am the mayor of a small
7 coastal town of Palm Beach Shores. We just
8 recently completed undergrounding our utility
9 service. So, for the past year and a half, we've
10 been working particularly closely with FPL
11 engineering department and customer service
12 department.

13 I give them five stars in every phase of the
14 project of -- and, on their own dime, not
15 originally part of the project, they included,
16 automated feeder-switch transformers and -- so that
17 we would not lose electricity if we lost one of our
18 town feeder lines.

19 They're -- I can't say enough good things --
20 accolades about the -- the work that they did, both
21 in supporting it financially and in terms of the
22 engineering service.

23 Now, I'll turn the page, as a customer, and
24 tell you that it provides excellence -- FPL has
25 provided elec- -- excellence -- excellent service,

1 quick snap-back when we had -- when we had storms.
2 Even the first hurricane back in 2005, that
3 basically leveled the poles, the transformers,
4 everything -- we had service back in ten days,
5 which was outstanding.

6 The switch to clean air -- we're a witness of
7 that. We went with a heavy oil -- we have a heavy
8 oil plant located not far from our -- from our
9 town. You've switched that over to natural gas and
10 eliminating a lot of soot and dirt in the air. So,
11 it's another five stars for the service.

12 So, both as -- as mayor and looking at the
13 town, in ter- -- looking at FPL, in terms of the
14 service provided in assisting us with our
15 undergrounding, and as a customer, I think it's a
16 first-rate company and I would support an increase,
17 given what's lying ahead of us in terms of
18 conversion to clean energy. Period. End of
19 statement.

20 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Fiers, are you still
21 there?

22 MR. FIERS: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: We -- we had lost you for a
24 second. Are you done with your comments?

25 MR. FIERS: I'm done with my comments, yes.

1 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you very
2 much, Mayor Fiers, for your time. We appreciate
3 it.

4 MR. FIERS: You're welcome. Bye-bye.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: Next three will be Dean
6 Warhaft, Dan Cruz, and Carlos Abrigo.

7 Mr. Warhaft, if you're on the line, I need to
8 swear you in.

9 MR. WARHAFT: Okay. Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: (Whereupon, Dean Warhaft
11 was sworn by Commissioner Fay.)

12 MR. WARHAFT: I do.

13 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

14 MR. WARHAFT: Thank you.

15 First, I -- I'd like to thank the Commission
16 for giving me the time to speak today.

17 My name, again, is Dean Warhaft, Florida East
18 Coast Realty. We are developers and we're
19 responsible for building what is the tallest
20 building in the state of Florida at this time;
21 although, I'm sure our record will be beat.

22 We spend a tremendous amount of time working
23 with the engineering and planning team at FPL,
24 their central service center for -- for downtown
25 Miami. And -- and what I can say is that the

1 service that we receive is second to none,
2 including the service that we receive from our
3 liaison that is a service that FPL provides to the
4 largest developers in the area.

5 We -- we, as developers, wouldn't be able to
6 do what -- what we have accomplished in the City of
7 Miami over the past 20 years without working hand
8 in hand with a company like FP&L.

9 And so, while, on a personal level, I never
10 want to have to pay more for service or for my
11 electricity, I'm not going to make a judgment call
12 today as to whether FPL is or isn't entitled to
13 their rate increase. I'm going to leave that to
14 the specialists that are analyzing this, but from
15 the standpoint of what we get, as developers, as
16 far as service goes, and the service that I get as
17 an individual, I do believe FPL is the best service
18 provider.

19 And -- and I say that, doing -- as somebody
20 who works on developments in other parts of the
21 state and in other regions of the country with
22 other service providers that -- that I have to work
23 with on a daily basis. So, I put FPL at the top of
24 the utility list.

25 Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
2 time, Mr. Warhaft.

3 Dan Cruz. Dan Cruz.

4 Carlos Abrigo. Carlos Abrigo.

5 MR. ABRIGO: I'm here.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Abrigo, you're
7 recognized.

8 MR. ABRIGO: Thank you. My name is Carlos
9 Abrigo. I'm a resident of Loxahatchee, Florida.
10 Today I am speaking on behalf of Resource Metal
11 Recycling. We are a metal-recycling facility in
12 Pompano Beach, Florida.

13 I'm going to talk briefly about my positive
14 experiences with FP&L. We operate a 2500-
15 horsepower shredding plant here in Florida and we
16 continually need the support of our power provider.

17 FP&L has nothing but -- great as far as giving
18 us support. And I just want to be -- be heard of
19 the good service that they provide every step of
20 the way. Every time we ask for support from giving
21 us some time to test our machines, they have always
22 been there.

23 Unfortunately, right now, our company doesn't
24 have any position whether to agree or disagree as
25 to the application for rate increase. All I have

1 to say is that we have a very positive relationship
2 with FP&L and they are a top-notch provider of
3 power, and we look forward to working with them for
4 the very -- for the future.

5 I thank them so much and I thank you for
6 giving me a chance to participate in this process.
7 Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
9 comments, Mr. Abrigo.

10 Next three will be Chuck Huff, Lucienne Pears,
11 and Ben Starling.

12 Mr. Huff, if you're on the line, I need to
13 swear you in.

14 MR. HUFF: All right. Go, sir. Fine.

15 (Whereupon, Chuck Huff was sworn by
16 Commissioner Fay.)

17 MR. HUFF: I do.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

19 MR. HUFF: All right. Thank you for having me
20 and allowing me to speak here. So -- so, first of
21 all, my name is Chuck Huff. I'm with the Village
22 of North Palm Beach, and I have been here for 15
23 years. I am the director of special projects and
24 I'm also the acting director of public works.

25 Having -- having a -- a relationship with all

1 the utility agencies is critical, but -- but I have
2 found in my -- in my time here that FP&L has
3 delivered that high level of experience with the
4 relationships that I've had with different
5 individuals over the years, but I will tell you
6 that -- that they are very -- and have been to this
7 day, and still -- very responsive to our needs.

8 As most of the individuals that I've worked
9 with over the years with FP&L, I can tell you that
10 they will -- they will tell you that I am high-
11 maintenance, but -- but there is also a lot of
12 friendships that have been created out of these
13 relationships.

14 As the Village of North Palm Beach, we have
15 roughly around 13,000 residents that -- I am the
16 advocate. I am the voice of these -- these people,
17 and the -- and having FP&L on -- on my side. And
18 they have been very responsive to any time -- even
19 during -- during emergency operations, they have
20 always been very active in making sure that our
21 needs are taken care of.

22 Also, the professionalism of the staff, as --
23 as they -- everybody that I've worked with from
24 FP&L will tell you that I want everything for free
25 for my residents and my community. I -- I realize

1 and respect the fact that everything is not free,
2 but I will tell you that they always work with us
3 to make sure that we are taken care of.

4 And I am very grateful -- not to throw names
5 out there, but these are -- been my two strongest
6 advocates in most-recent years -- is Stephanie
7 Mitrione and -- and Sue Park. And they have --
8 they have put up with me. And I wanted to thank,
9 not only FP&L for employing them because of their
10 high level of experience and -- and relationships,
11 but also for putting up with my -- my needs here
12 for my community.

13 And that's all I have.

14 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
15 comment.

16 Next is Lucienne Pears.

17 MS. PEARS: Thank you very much. I apologize
18 for my voice this morning. I'm fighting a little
19 bit of a cold.

20 Again my name is Lucienne Pears. I'm the vice
21 president for economic and business development for
22 Kitson & Partners at Babcock Ranch here in
23 Southwest Florida. I'm also personally an FPL
24 customer at my residence.

25 I am speaking today as representative of

1 Babcock Ranch and on behalf of Babcock and Kitson &
2 Partners. So, Babcock Ranch is the world's first
3 new town utilizing on-site solar generation
4 facilities to produce more clean, renewable energy
5 than it consumes.

6 Our emphasis on innovation and technology all
7 powered by clean renewable solar energy provided by
8 Florida Power & Light has opened the door for job
9 creation by positioning Babcock Ranch as the
10 premier place for sustainability-minded companies
11 to call home.

12 I'll give you a couple of examples -- recent
13 examples of this. We just celebrated the opening
14 of a \$13-million prototype, first of its kind in
15 the U.S., hydroponics operation that is leading the
16 way towards a more sustainable food supply.

17 Additionally, we're in final negotiations with
18 a Caliente, California-based manufacturer in the
19 home-construction-products industries. They're
20 interested in locating a first-of-its-kind net-zero
21 manufacturing facility at Babcock Ranch made
22 possible only through our partnership with the
23 Florida Power & Light.

24 Finally, I wanted to mention to you a new
25 pilot-drone delivery program that we're launching

1 by a company called Flytrex. They are one of three
2 in the United States that have received FAA
3 approval for delivery of personal goods utilizing
4 drone technologies. And we're launching that
5 personal drone-delivery service program at Babcock
6 Ranch. Again, this type of innovation would not be
7 possible without our partnership with the Florida
8 Power & Light.

9 In short, our vision of making Babcock Ranch a
10 place for the study, development, implementation,
11 and deployment of forward-looking sustainable
12 technologies has become a reality. We're
13 attracting leading innovators in search of the
14 living laboratory so they can design, deploy, and
15 refine these smart technologies, and it wouldn't be
16 happening without our collaborative partnership
17 with FPL.

18 The clean renewable solar energy that powers
19 our town has opened the door for many companies,
20 and the source of this energy has become a key
21 location factor in site-selection decisions, and is
22 often the last and most-critical key component for
23 ESG companies in choosing a U.S. location for a
24 facility.

25 Ever since FPL's first three 74-and-a-half

1 megawatt solar-generation plants in Southwest
2 Florida went online at the end of 2016, they've
3 been lining up resources and preparing
4 infrastructure to allow Florida to seize a leading
5 role in renewable-energy research, development, and
6 implementation.

7 Their massive expansion of solar generation
8 provides the entire state with a significant
9 competitive advantage.

10 In addition to their commitment to having
11 30 million solar panels online by 2030, FPL is
12 researching and testing battery-storage technology
13 aimed at predicting and improving the
14 predictability and reliability of solar power.
15 This sort of technology --

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Ms. Pears, I'm going to
17 need you to wrap up your -- your comments, please.

18 MS. PEARS: Sure. Absolutely. I will close
19 by saying all Floridians benefit from FPL's
20 investment an energy infrastructure system and
21 increasing the system reliability, enhancing energy
22 independence and diversification, and stabilizing
23 energy costs, all while reducing greenhouse gas
24 emissions.

25 We're proud to be partners with FPL. We look

1 forward to continuing and growing this partnership
2 with FP- -- FPL, and we are very supportive of the
3 work that they're doing.

4 That's all I have to say.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank -- thank you
6 for your comments.

7 Next is Ben Starling.

8 MR. STARLING: Good morning. My name is Ben
9 Starling. I'm a small-business owner in Palm Beach
10 County. I currently reside at 2800 North Ocean
11 Drive on Singer Island.

12 First and foremost, thank you to the Public
13 Service Commission for allowing us to speak. I
14 suspect this is not exactly the way everyone wishes
15 to spend their Friday before a holiday weekend.
16 So, thank you.

17 Second, I -- I travel extensively for work and
18 have experienced, firsthand, brownouts, blackouts
19 and pretty shoddy electrical systems, in my
20 travels. And this has made me an incredible fan of
21 Florida Power & Light.

22 I certainly don't pretend to understand the
23 complexities of the industry, but, this, I know:
24 The last major storm that hit our area, my lights
25 didn't flicker, my air conditioning didn't stop,

1 and there were minimal short-term outages in the
2 area.

3 To me, that -- that level of dependable
4 service is worth a few extra dollars a year. I
5 don't know of one person who wouldn't gladly pay
6 that, especially if they thought they might have
7 prolonged hours and days without electricity after
8 a storm.

9 Thank you.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
11 comments.

12 Next three will be David Spain, Regina
13 Herring, and Jim Werbelow.

14 Mr. Spain, are you on the line?

15 MR. SPAIN: Yes, I'm on the line now.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're re- -- you're
17 recognized, Mr. Spain.

18 MR. SPAIN: My name -- my name is David Spain.
19 I live at 2105 North Tropical Trail, Merritt
20 Island, Suite 2953. I currently have multiple FPL
21 meter connections and have been a FPL customer
22 since, I guess, 1972.

23 I'm a retired hotel owner-operator in Cocoa
24 Beach, having operated a 170-unit from 20 May, '72
25 to 26 August, 2018. And thank God I was finally

1 able to retire.

2 I -- I witnessed FPL efforts firsthand over 46
3 years of continually improving the infrastructure
4 in Cocoa Beach as well as the -- the site where
5 we're building our home on Merritt Island, and
6 where we now live.

7 The lifeblood of any economy, but especially
8 our economy, is reasonably-priced power with
9 reliable and consistent service. The increase may
10 be -- may seem to be too much for some to accept,
11 but it still leaves us paying less than most other
12 areas in the United States.

13 The one thing I personally don't want to do is
14 sweat, and there are a lot of places in the country
15 that you end up doing that because the -- the power
16 goes in and out.

17 In our area, we have multiple Florida Power &
18 Light solar farms, have one of the newest natural-
19 gas power plants, which -- gas-fired plants, which
20 was built in what I thought was an unbelievably
21 short period of time with no real issues to the
22 community during the build process and even
23 providing a warming area for manatees during the
24 process to replace the shutdown warm-water
25 discharge from the old plant.

1 We started building our retirement home on
2 Merritt Island a couple of years ago and worked
3 with Florida Power & Light designers Pam Diaz and
4 Eric Anderson. And they made what could have been
5 a -- for a novice -- a very confusing and
6 complicated process very easy.

7 When they brought service to the property, the
8 actual workers were very professional and easy to
9 work with as well. And that's been my experience
10 over, now, 48, 49 years of dealing with the -- with
11 Flor- -- Florida Power & Light personnel. I'm
12 impressed with them. I came from Virginia where it
13 was not quite as -- it was a decent utility, but
14 not -- not anything like Florida Power & Light.

15 So, I -- I really appreciate what they've
16 done. I -- you know, I think that giving them an
17 increase after five years is certainly worth it.

18 Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you for your
20 comments.

21 Regina Herring. Regina Herring.

22 Jim Werbelow. Jim Werbelow.

23 Next three will be Zayne Smith, Michael
24 Mammarelli, and Gerry Angeli -- and I'll need to
25 swear in Ms. Angeli.

1 Zayne Smith, are you on the line? Zayne
2 Smith.

3 Michael Mammarelli.

4 MR. MAMMARELLI: Yeah, this is Mike. Can you
5 hear me?

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yes, Mr. Mamm- --
7 Mr. Mammarelli, you're -- you're recognized,
8 Mr. Mammarelli.

9 MR. MAMMARELLI: Good morning, Commissioners.
10 My name is Michael Mammarelli and I'm an FPL
11 customer located in Okeechobee, 107 Park Street in
12 the City of Okeechobee.

13 I've been an FPL customer for close to 25
14 years, living in both Palm Beach County and
15 Okeechobee County. And I would like to say that I
16 do support the FPL and their rate in- -- rate
17 request.

18 When I see all the improvements that FPL is
19 making around the state, whether installing new
20 poles to withstand some of the stronger storms
21 that -- and hurricanes, building -- building
22 cleaner energy centers, installing solar panels,
23 FPL is definitely doing their part, not only to
24 keep customers' lights on and -- but also doing
25 what's best for our state to be green.

1 All these improvements are also able to
2 keep -- help keep up with the large population
3 moving to Florida -- everybody is moving here --
4 allowing FPL to continue with all these projects to
5 keep our state ahead of the rest and prevent the
6 building of more power plants.

7 Hearing about all the electric-grid issues in
8 other states makes me appreciate being an FPL
9 customer. FPL is always looking ahead, which
10 explains why they are so respected in the industry
11 and are all called on by other states when other
12 states need the help.

13 With that -- with that, I'd like to mention
14 FPL's customer service is always great to work
15 with. They always help me out with -- and always
16 help me out, over many years. Whether I needed
17 assistance with my business account or my personal
18 residence, their professionalism -- and they've
19 been real professional in helping me.

20 The cost of everything is going up. And being
21 in the restaurant business, as an owner, I'm
22 feeling -- I'm feeling the pinch just like
23 everybody else. So, when it comes to my electric
24 bill maybe going up over the next few years, as a
25 consumer, I also need to do my part and explore

1 where I can ser- -- save money.

2 I receive e-mails and FPL commercial -- I see
3 the FPL commercials where they provide tips and
4 programs to help consumers reduce costs. So, I
5 probably need to do my part and -- and look into a
6 lot of these changes to save myself some money as
7 well.

8 So, that's all I'd like to say and I'd like to
9 thank you for your time today.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
11 comments.

12 Gerry Angeli -- An-ghel-ee.

13 MR. ANGELI: I'm here -- Anj-e-lee.

14 COMMISSIONER FAY: I need to swear you in real
15 quick.

16 (Whereupon, Gerry Angeli was sworn by
17 Commissioner Fay.)

18 MR. ANGELI: It is.

19 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

20 MR. ANGELI: Thank you very much -- or --
21 somebody is speaking in.

22 COMMISSIONER FAY: I think you're okay,
23 Mr. Angeli. Go ahead.

24 MR. ANGELI: Okay. I appreciate the
25 opportunity to speak. And my testimony is based on

1 my experience of being an FPL customer, both at a
2 business and consumer level for 20-some years.

3 To me, FP&L has established they are competent
4 and in control of their business and continually
5 improve their -- their services and -- and public
6 offerings.

7 They stay at the forefront of technology
8 and -- and have shown the ability to adapt
9 technology, implementing clean energy, solar, and
10 other methods of energy -- or electricity
11 transmission.

12 They've invested in smart systems, but most of
13 all, to me, they have shown the ability to really
14 know what they're doing with customer service.
15 They're easy with -- they're easy to communicate
16 with. They're responsive. They're -- they have
17 the app and the website. They keep people informed
18 of what's going on.

19 They're doing the work to harden the system
20 because of the things that are happening with the
21 storms, and they're out and about in the
22 neighborhood all the time.

23 In the time that I've been a customer, their
24 response times and recovery times have improved
25 tremendously. And the expectations of the

1 customers that live around me are forever
2 increasing.

3 In particular, they've described the situation
4 where they need money to continue to grow and to
5 continue to prosper. Florida is growing. Florida
6 is a receiver state. People are moving here. And
7 I think it's -- in order for FPL to stay on the --
8 on -- in the forefront and deliver the service that
9 we've always -- we've become accustomed to and our
10 ever-increasing our demands for those services --
11 that they be granted the rate hikes that they've
12 been asking for.

13 They're a good company. They're one of the
14 legal -- leading energy providers in the country,
15 if not the world. And so, I appreciate this
16 opportunity to speak positively about them and also
17 remind everybody that they -- they give quite a bit
18 back and support many of the community activities
19 that go on in the areas that they service.

20 Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you very much
22 for your comments.

23 The next three will be Christopher Benjamin,
24 Nancy Metayer, and Jamie Torrens. I'll need to
25 swear you in, Ms. Metayer.

1 Christopher Benjamin, are you on the line?

2 Christopher Benjamin.

3 Ms. Metayer, are you on the line?

4 MS. METAYER: I am.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: (Whereupon, Nancy Metayer
6 was sworn by Commissioner Fay.)

7 MS. METAYER: Yes I do.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized.

9 MS. METAYER: Thank you. Good morning, Public
10 Service Commission. My name is Nancy Metayer. I
11 come before you as Coral Springs resident, a
12 community advocate, and a public servant.

13 I'm urging you not to increase current FPL
14 rates. Floridians across the state are still
15 recovering from the pandemic that left people in a
16 health and economic crisis. Now is not the time
17 for the Public Service Commission to allow FPL to
18 increase electricity bills by as much as
19 20 percent.

20 Rate hikes disproportionately affect low-
21 income families, especially our seniors. This is
22 the opposite of what we've seen national- --
23 nationally to help people recover financially from
24 the pandemic.

25 We've seen eviction moratoriums extended,

1 student-loan deferment extended, and increased
2 unemployment assistance to give individuals time to
3 recover.

4 Low-income communities of color in Florida
5 face a high energy burden, meaning that an outside
6 portion of their income goes towards home energy
7 bills including electricity, natural gas, and other
8 heating fuels. Please refer to the ACEE [sic]
9 report for further statistics.

10 650,000 residential customers last month were
11 late on their bills, roughly one million
12 Floridians. Now, FPL wants to increase rates for
13 those same people. It's not the right thing to do
14 right now.

15 Lastly, I encourage you to center communities
16 impacted by -- by the pandemic and rein- -- revisit
17 the investments in the proposed gas power plant in
18 Dania Beach and the four new gas tribunals [sic] in
19 Pensacola. Instead, I encourage more
20 weatherization initiatives and solar-energy access
21 that will contribute to more-reliable and cost-
22 effective services.

23 Thank you so much.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
25 comments.

1 Next is Jamie Torrens. Jamie Torrens.

2 Next three will be Noel Cleland, Fernando
3 Bonet, and Kathy Rudd.

4 Noel Cleland, are you on the line?

5 MR. CLELAND: Yes, I'm on the line.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: You're recognized --

7 MR. CLELAND: Hello?

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: -- Mr. Cleland. You're
9 recognized.

10 MR. CLELAND: Yes, my name is Noel Cleland. I
11 live at 5990 Southwest 50th Street in Miami, and I
12 thank you for the time to be able to speak to you.

13 And I would like to just add my comments that
14 a rate increase is not -- not something that's --
15 that's appropriate at this time. There were some
16 good comments about what a -- what a great company
17 Florida Power & Light is. And I agree, they're a
18 great company.

19 They're competent and they've -- they've made
20 an effort to adapt their technology, which is what
21 any good company would do, but that's a separate
22 issue from the need for a rate hike.

23 It's not r- -- Florida Power & Light is not
24 losing me, so there's no reason to think that
25 they're in some sort of desperate need. And I

1 can't see the same thing for their customers.
2 There are many customers that do not need increases
3 in their bills.

4 And so, this is -- if they're a good company,
5 they would take that into consideration, continue
6 what they've been doing in the past. They're --
7 they will be expanding their business, but that's
8 also because the customer base is expanding, which
9 will be greater income anyway. That's the standard
10 corporate model. You don't need to increase the
11 rates because you're expanding your business.

12 I also would suggest that their efforts to
13 promote solar has been minimal. I do have a solar
14 system on my house, but I -- there has been several
15 steps along the way where Florida Power & Light has
16 actually discouraged the independent energy
17 production and the idea of -- of moving from a
18 model of consolidated power, which is what we have
19 at nuclear plants, to distributed power, which is
20 the ability for some of Florida Power & Light's
21 customers to be able to provide their own energy
22 needs, especially during peak hours -- is a model
23 that would actually allow Florida Power & Light to
24 support more customers without any addition --
25 additional cost.

1 So, to me, instead of Florida Power & Light
2 discouraging the solar systems that people are
3 trying to get on their homes, they should be
4 subsidizing or at least encouraging it.

5 So, Florida Power & Light has done a lot of
6 good things, but as far as corporations go, so have
7 many others. And I haven't heard anything that's
8 justified a rate increase of up to 20 percent over
9 four years.

10 So, that's my comments.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you so much
12 for your comments.

13 Next is Fernando Bonet. Fernando Bonet.

14 Kathy Rudd.

15 MS. RUDD: Hello. This is Kathy Rudd.

16 COMMISSIONER FAY: Ms. Rudd, you're
17 recognized.

18 MS. RUDD: Just wanted to call and appreciate
19 the -- me being a member of Gulf Power. They have
20 done excellent service in my area, which is a rural
21 area of the Florida Panhandle -- Chipley, Florida.

22 We had a serious automobile accident out on
23 our highway in -- in March, right down the road
24 from my house. It took out a power pole. Of
25 course, it was cold, it was raining, it was a

1 little windy. And the crew was out here and had us
2 all -- all of our neighborhoods back in service
3 within an incredible short period of time. It was
4 unbelievable.

5 Any time something is not right, Gulf Power is
6 there for us. The -- I talked with several of the
7 neighbors and they're a hundred percent behind how
8 good of service that Gulf Power gives to our area.
9 And you know, that's -- that's what we're here for.

10 If there needs to be a rate increase to keep
11 things working as well as they are going now, then
12 that's -- that's the way life is. That's -- that's
13 called the economy. Things do have to change.

14 And that's basically -- my family's been a
15 member of Gulf Power for really probably over 30
16 years, maybe more, and never had a problem, never
17 had an issue they could not fix in a short period
18 of time.

19 And thank you for the opportunity.

20 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you for your
21 comments, Ms. Rudd.

22 All right. Next --

23 MS. RUDD: All right. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: Next will be Christina
25 Crosby, Jenneva Clauss, and Herman Younger.

1 And, Ms. Crosby, I'm going to need to swear
2 you in if you're on the line. Cristina Crosby?

3 Jenneva Clauss.

4 MS. CLAUSS: Hi. Yes, can you hear me?

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yes, Ms. Clauss, you're
6 recognized.

7 MS. CLAUSS: Okay. Thank you. Hi, my name is
8 Jenneva Clauss, and I'm a resident of Miami-Dade
9 County. I'm here today to oppose FPL's rate
10 increase.

11 I want to start by saying I have seen,
12 firsthand, the effects that COVID-19 has had on
13 Florida. I've spent hours waiting in food-
14 distribution lines, bringing people food, and
15 helping people apply for much-needed assistance
16 after losing their job.

17 While people are still recovering from the
18 effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we should not
19 increase the cost burden in process at the cost of
20 families. Providing reliable service, which should
21 be the expectation, shouldn't be used as an excuse
22 to profit off of us even more.

23 In the wake of the global pandemic, FPL is now
24 asking for two billion in an increase to their
25 profit margin. Why is investing in their own

1 company coming at the cost of the people they claim
2 to care about and serve?

3 If peo- -- if FPL really cared about investing
4 in sustainable energy, why did FPL lobby for shady
5 amendments that would restrict solar usage and
6 expand it in Florida in 2018?

7 In a prior call, one caller stated, when the
8 power goes out, I freak out. I am sure that
9 over -- that the over-half-a-million households
10 that have had their power shut off during the
11 pandemic felt that same way. People that are
12 forced to make decisions between food, rent, or
13 electricity share the same sentiment.

14 We should not force even more families to make
15 these impossible decisions, not to mention that
16 having electricity is a health issue. As we move
17 into record heat, our communities need access to
18 lifesaving electricity.

19 In addition to the half a million households
20 that have had their power shut off, over 660,000
21 households with the -- are late on their power
22 bills last month. What will happen to these
23 households with the rent [sic] increase? How will
24 they be able to afford it? FPL wants to take more
25 money from people who are already struggling. FPL

1 is trying to line their own pockets while depleting
2 ours.

3 Lastly, natural gas is not a clean energy.
4 Drilling of natural gas releases methane, which is
5 a greenhouse gas. To portray these investments as
6 environmentally-friendly is a falsehood.

7 I, again, want to express my opposition to the
8 rent [sic] increase by FPL. Thank you for your
9 time.

10 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Thank you for your
11 comments.

12 Herman Younger.

13 MR. YOUNGER: Yes, hello. My name is Herman
14 Younger, and as a Sierra Club organizer, I have
15 many constituents who are serviced by FPL. And due
16 to their inability to be a good actor, I am deeply
17 concerned and in full opposition of the proposed
18 20-percent increase.

19 FP&L has always been a bad actor. For
20 example, on rates, they say they're the lowest, but
21 this is completely inaccurate. And their inability
22 in truth-telling proves they cannot be trusted.
23 They are currently the seventh-highest IOU rate in
24 the nation.

25 ACEEE reports rank FP&L 51 of 52 major utility

1 companies when it comes to energy efficiency.

2 FP&L states they have great customer service.
3 Then why is it the case that FP&L wants to increase
4 rates by 6.5 billion over the next four years?

5 FP&L attempted to end shutoff moratorium at
6 the height of the second wave of the pandemic, at a
7 time that 600,000 Florida customers are behind on
8 their electric bills.

9 FP&L attempted to block Florida Rising, an
10 organization focused on racial and economic
11 justice, from participating in the rate case, a
12 historically white-dominant space.

13 And on being fossil-fuel leaders, FP&L is
14 converting shut-down coal plants and converting
15 them to natural-gas plants, continuing to pollute
16 with natural gas.

17 FP&L also attempted to trick Floridians into
18 voting for a utility-backed measure that would
19 limit rooftop expansion and net-metering.

20 These are just a few of many examples of
21 FP&L's inability to put the interests of the people
22 that they serve first. Again, for these reasons, I
23 and the Sierra Club Florida are vehemently opposed
24 to FPL's request for a 20-percent increase.

25 And, quite frankly, the Commission's own

1 interests are beginning to be questionable for
2 exhibiting bias in a previous hearing last week
3 when a public comment in support of the rate
4 increase was the only comment that was praised by
5 the Commission.

6 Is the decision of this case already
7 predetermined? Is the process a just and equitable
8 one when FP&L already has a hold of the Commission?
9 The white middle-upper-class privilege in this
10 hearing is astronomical.

11 To say, if a rate increase is what they have
12 to do, then that's just what it is -- this isn't
13 simply about not liking a rate increase. When an
14 increase in prices in anything can be the
15 difference between obtaining food and shelter for
16 black and brown low-income communities, where is
17 your empathy? Step into the shoes of others that
18 are not white and privileged, like yourselves.

19 I yield my time.

20 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Younger.

21 Next is Madame Holmes.

22 MR. SARWAT: Hi -- this is. This is -- I
23 professor at FIU. Can I be recognized?

24 COMMISSIONER FAY: I'm -- I'm sorry. Really
25 quick, just to make sure Madame Holmes is not on

1 the line. Madame Holmes?

2 And then, sir, are you -- are you signed up to
3 speak?

4 MR. SARWAT: Yes, please.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: What is your name?

6 MR. SARWAT: Arif Sarwat. Last name Sarwat.

7 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Mr. Sarwat, you're
8 recognized.

9 MR. SARWAT: Thank you. I wanted to highlight
10 another aspect of FPL and FIU partnership where we
11 are working very hard to get employment for the
12 local community and the students who are
13 graduating.

14 I'm a professor at FIU and, with partnership
15 with FPL, we have established a state-of-art power
16 plant on the campus. And this power plant is not
17 available to any university across America.

18 The benefit of that to the local community is
19 that all the students who are going through our
20 training through this power plant -- they're
21 getting jobs. In fact, FPL has become the number-
22 one hire for our students here.

23 And these are the people who are contributing
24 to the local community. This was always a
25 challenge that we look for students who know about

1 renewable energy, lithium batteries, and other
2 things, and we were getting students from outside
3 Florida to get good jobs at FPL.

4 We have reversed the whole equation. With the
5 partnership with FPL, they have invested multi-
6 million dollars projects on the campus, which has
7 helped us build our training program with our own
8 local students from the Miami-to-Jacksonville area.

9 They're -- they are getting the training and
10 they get jobs before they graduate. And most of
11 them are retained out here. We have also partnered
12 with them to retool our courses and other things.

13 So, I wanted to highlight another aspect, that
14 we are doing state-of-art things in Florida, but we
15 want to give back to the community the right way
16 because many of the families and many of those
17 people are first-time job employers with such a
18 good system. So, I would like to promote that.

19 I would like say that this is an opportunity
20 of win-win. To bring our students and even retrain
21 people, we are launching a new program to retrain
22 who have lost jobs so that they get employment in
23 the renewable area.

24 And that is where the partnership has excelled
25 and that is where we are getting the future people

1 involved so that Florida is not left behind and
2 Florida is number one in this area.

3 That is where I'll stop. Thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you for your
5 comments, Mr. Sarwat.

6 Are there any other customers that are signed
7 up to speak that have not spoken? All right.
8 Well, with -- with that, I'll just remind everybody
9 that comments can still be submitted to the
10 Commission through mail or -- or e-mail.

11 And, unless Commissioners have any other
12 comments, then we are adjourned. Thank you, staff,
13 for all your work on this.

14 (Whereupon, the proceedings concluded at 11:39
15 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF LEON)

I, ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY, 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 27th day of July, 2021.



ANDREA KOMARIDIS WRAY
NOTARY PUBLIC
COMMISSION #HH 089181
EXPIRES February 9, 2025