

Antonia Hover

From: Office of Commissioner Passidomo
Sent: Tuesday, August 9, 2022 9:21 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20210015
Attachments: Editorial Generating shade at NextEra Energy

Please place the attached in Docket No. 20210015.

Thank you!

Antonia Hover

From: Sarah Ward <rahward3@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 8, 2022 5:10 PM
To: Sarah Ward
Subject: Editorial | Generating shade at NextEra Energy

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Palm Beach Post Editorial Board
Published 7:17 a.m. ET Aug. 7, 2022

Reports that our hometown power company, NextEra Energy and its FPL subsidiary, used a consultant to overturn elections, dig up dirt on city officials, spy on a reporter and suggest other malevolent ways to propagandize for profit and wipe the slate clean of those who might question it, are discouraging and despicable.

Clearly this Fortune 500 corporation's executive suite has grown far too insular. Call us naive, but even to contemplate hiring consultants who specialize in such behavior is beyond atrocious and calls for immediate shareholder action. One has to fear, as this news surfaced only by the grace of internal warfare at the Matrix, LLC. consulting firm, what else FPL might be conjuring that we don't know about.

The Orlando Sentinel reported the utility's CEO, Eric Silagy, ordered subordinates to make life "a living hell" for one state lawmaker whose bill would let landlords sell tenants cheap solar power, bypassing FPL. The utility's consultants got someone with the same last name to run against the offending state senator, splitting the vote and ousting the senator in the next election. The ringer later said he'd been bribed to do it.

Emails and other documents leaked to the Sentinel and Miami Herald showed the utility's hired hands had one Jacksonville newspaper reporter who'd written critically about FPL tailed.

And if you can't win over the media, why not be the media? "Matrix also exerted political influence through the press, with its operatives acquiring control of a Tallahassee-based politics news site, The Capitolist. That gave Matrix consultants and FPL executives direct input on Capitolist stories," the Sentinel wrote.

"The site's publisher, Brian Burgess, a former top spokesperson for past Florida Gov. Rick Scott, also suggested in emails that Matrix should lure prominent Florida journalists to a new site or purchase local papers owned by media giant Gannett Co. (owner of this newspaper and the Palm Beach Daily News) and then lay off most of the "clown reporters," to "inject content" into publications without anyone knowing who was "pulling the strings." That proposal was forwarded to Silagy at FPL but never came to fruition.

Ari Peskoe, Director of the Electricity Law Initiative at Harvard Law School, told the Sentinel that the "whole purpose" of firms like Matrix "is to conceal that it's the utility doing this."

FPL has shrugged off the reports. A spokesman said buying a news outlet would make no business sense.

FPL has a right to press for higher rates and higher profits. Earlier this year the state granted them a new series of increases to be implemented over the next few years. That's just business. The company jumped the shark, though, when in addition to rate hikes for itself, it lobbied hard to get the state to cut rates that homeowners get for selling back their rooftop solar panel electricity to the utility. The company, which has worked laudably to

expand solar capacity in recent years, argued that it would be more efficient for it to be the one to collect the sun's power rather than further encourage individual homeowners. It was a greedy move and the press and public saw through it.

But these latest revelations show that was just a hint of the behind-the-scenes attitudes putting profits above conscience.

NextEra presents itself to the public as a knight in shining armor, with its constant improvements in hurricane preparedness and response, and its transitions from oil to natural gas, expansion of solar generation and research into green hydrogen as another alternative fuel source. It employs thousands throughout the state and from all appearances serves customers well, a good corporate example for all. But its heavy-handed, backroom efforts to control public debate prove that elements within NextEra harbor Stone Age attitudes and methods.

Shareholders, regulators and the taxpaying public that allows it to generate big, monopolistic profits need to rein-in these moves if NextEra execs won't do it themselves, because the one thing that's not easy for a big power company to generate is trust.

<https://www.palmbeachpost.com/story/opinion/2022/08/07/editorial-nextera-energy-violates-public-trust/10200168002/>