

I. Meeting Packet



State of Florida
Public Service Commission
INTERNAL AFFAIRS AGENDA

Tuesday – February 16, 2021

9:30 AM

Room 148 – Betty Easley Conference Center

1. Discussion of Florida's Relay Service
2. Legislative Updates
3. General Counsel's Report
4. Executive Director's Report
5. Other Matters

BB/aml

OUTSIDE PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION ON
ANY OF THE AGENDAED ITEMS SHOULD CONTACT THE
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT (850) 413-6463.

III. Supplemental Materials for Internal Affairs

Note: The records reflect that there were no supplemental materials provided to the Commission during this Internal Affairs meeting.

IV. Transcript

BEFORE THE
FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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PROCEEDINGS: INTERNAL AFFAIRS

COMMISSIONERS PARTICIPATING: CHAIRMAN GARY F. CLARK
COMMISSIONER ART GRAHAM
COMMISSIONER JULIE I. BROWN
COMMISSIONER ANDREW GILES FAY
COMMISSIONER MIKE LA ROSA

DATE: Tuesday, February 16, 2021

TIME: Commenced: 9:30 a.m.
Concluded: 11:15 a.m.

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

REPORTED BY: DEBRA R. KRICK
Court Reporter

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

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

2 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Good morning, Commissioners.
3 Welcome to the Internal Affairs agenda for Tuesday,
4 February 16th. It's good to see everyone. I hope
5 that everyone is surviving the cold weather. I
6 don't know, Commissioner Brown, you probably
7 haven't received any of the cold weather yet, have
8 you?

9 COMMISSIONER BROWN: It's 85 degrees down in
10 Tampa.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Wow. I left home this
12 morning, it was 31, and got here and it was 46. It
13 felt like a heatwave when I got to Tallahassee this
14 morning.

15 It's good to see everyone this morning. We've
16 got a lengthy Internal Affairs agenda this morning,
17 a lot of items that we would like to cover today.
18 We are going to begin with a discussion on
19 Florida's Relay Service, and I have asked
20 Commissioner Fay, if he would, to be prepared to
21 kind of tee up some -- some comments, remarks and
22 observations before we begin, and then we are going
23 it to get into reports from several individuals.

24 Commissioner Fay, any opening comments?

25 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 I know that the relay services, or FTRI, is
3 not necessarily a new topic of discussion to some
4 of my colleagues that have been on the Commission
5 for a while, but I did think after we saw their
6 budget annually that it made sense to have some
7 discussions before that budget comes to us. And I
8 think what's important about that is it's just such
9 an unusual structure where we serve as their
10 oversight for their spending, and I am not sure
11 there is anything else like that from the level
12 that we look at it.

13 So my hope is that, with you allowing this
14 opportunity, we can get to some of the
15 conversations about ways to improve the services,
16 both the quantity and quality of services, that are
17 provided to these folks who need them, but more
18 importantly, probably focus on how we are able to
19 do that within the confines of what's given to us.

20 So there is a lot of historical discussed --
21 discussion on the budget, and even some discussion
22 on changing the statutes. My hope is that we can
23 sort of take what we have and look at the structure
24 that we have to implement some changes sooner than
25 later, instead of looking at sort of a broader

1 comprehensive approach to making those changes.
2 Just because I think there -- there is some urgency
3 with what COVID-19 has done to the communications
4 of everybody, and changed the way that those
5 communications are working. So I think it's just
6 really sort of expedited the discussion.

7 I am extremely grateful that you have allowed
8 me the time, and the Commission the time to discuss
9 some of that. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I think
10 we have some pretty good presenters that will be
11 able to provide us some information.

12 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.

13 Any other Commissioners have any opening
14 comments before we begin our presentations this
15 morning?

16 All right. Well, we will get started then.
17 We are going to -- first up, Mr. Greg Fogelman is
18 on the line, I believe, with us. And, Greg, are
19 you there?

20 MR. FOGELMAN: Yes, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right.

22 MR. FOGELMAN: Good morning, Commissioner --
23 good morning, Commissioners. I am Greg Fogelman
24 with the Office of Industry Development & Market
25 Analysis.

1 I have been asked to present a brief overview
2 of the history establishing FTRI and the
3 Commission's responsibility related to the Relay
4 Program.

5 The Florida Legislature passed the
6 Telecommunications Access Systems Act, also known
7 as TASA, in 1991. The intent of TASA is to provide
8 basic telecommunications services for the hard of
9 hearing, deaf and speech disabled individuals in
10 the most cost-effective way.

11 As required by TASA, the Commission directed
12 the local exchange companies to not-for-profit
13 corporation to administer and distribute
14 specialized equipment. The Florida
15 Telecommunications Relay, Inc., or FTRI, was
16 created to fulfill this purpose.

17 As Commissioner Fay mentioned, the Commission
18 has oversight responsibilities over FTRI, and
19 reviews their annual budget. TASA mandates that
20 FTRI equipment distribution program and the Florida
21 Relay Service be funded by a monthly surcharge
22 billed to landline telephone customers in the state
23 of Florida. As part of FTRI's budget review, the
24 Commission evaluates the surcharge, which is
25 currently set at 10 cents per landline.

1 FTRI's current budget is about \$5 million.
2 And it also has a surplus account of about 17
3 million. The surplus account has been used to
4 offset declines in revenues from the assessment
5 factor, but was originally set -- established to
6 offset potential expenses related to video and IT
7 relay if the FCC were to require states to cover
8 those costs.

9 FTRI contracts with other organizations known
10 as regional distribution centers to distribute
11 equipment and provide customer training on the
12 proper use of the equipment and relay services.

13 The Commission is also responsible with
14 selecting and overseeing a provider of the relay
15 and caption services. To facilitate the selection
16 of a service provider, the Commission issues a
17 request for proposal to solicit bids. TASA
18 requires the Commissioner to award a contract the
19 bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to
20 the state. Among requirements that the Commission
21 must consider when selecting the provider include
22 accessibility of the service, the overall quality,
23 the cost, the qualifications of the bidder, and any
24 proposed service or technological enhancement they
25 might provide.

1 Historically, the winning bid is awarded a
2 three-year contract, that includes options for
3 one-year extensions. Those extensions have to be
4 mutually agreed by the Commission and the service
5 provider. Currently the service provider is Sprint
6 Accessibility.

7 An annual report is also required of the
8 Commission on the operation of the
9 Telecommunication Access System. TASA specifies
10 that the reports must briefly outline equipment
11 distribution, the number in of persons served, call
12 volume, revenue and expenditures, and proposals for
13 improvement or changes in the Telecommunications
14 Access System. The most recent report is available
15 on the Commission's website and was released in
16 December.

17 Staff is available for questions, or we can
18 hand it off to the next speaker at your pleasure.

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Fogelman.

20 Commissioners, do you have any questions for
21 Mr. Fogelman before we move to the next presenter?

22 All right, let's move right along. Next up is
23 Brett Bascom. Brett, are you on the line?

24 MR. BASCOM: Yes, I am.

25 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. You are

1 recognized.

2 MR. BASCOM: There we go.

3 Yeah. I am Brett Bascom. I am the business
4 manager of Florida Telecommunications Relay.

5 A little historical perspective for myself, I
6 actually was -- first came to FTRI in 1994. So
7 FTRI was a fairly new organization at that point in
8 time, and we continued to work with the program in
9 developing some of the uniqueness of the program
10 along the way.

11 When I first started, just some interesting
12 facts about the program itself, is there were
13 processes and procedures that had to be developed,
14 and we kind of worked with the Commission trying to
15 find out, you know, what the best way was to do
16 some of those things.

17 And just kind of summarizing FTRI's role, as
18 Greg already has a little bit, but several of our
19 roles are obviously to collect the TASA surcharge
20 and provide the equipment distribution program, but
21 outreach and information to the Florida citizens
22 about the program and about the relay service is
23 additionally something very important that -- that
24 we do, and I personally think that that's one of
25 the things that we can expand on, and help the

1 Florida citizens know about the program, know how
2 to use the relay service, and maybe we have some
3 opportunities in that area that we can discuss
4 going forward.

5 The equipment that we provide through the
6 program as well, TTY, text telephones for the deaf,
7 corded and cordless volume control phones, inline
8 amplifiers that also are able to be various levels
9 of decibel control on those as well. Caption
10 telephone by CapTel and various alerting devices
11 for the deaf and hard of hearing and speech
12 impaired for both visual and audible alerting
13 devices.

14 Some of the things that developed over time
15 was the regional distribution center system. And
16 when we first started -- and I apologize if I get a
17 little too long-winded because there is a whole lot
18 of information to give you guys, but the regional
19 distribution centers actually were originally
20 called training centers and they provided just
21 training on the equipment as we started to -- back
22 in 1994 and '95, get equipment out to the folks of
23 Florida and identify, you know, what their needs
24 were.

25 And back then, alls we had was a volume

1 control phone. There wasn't things like Bluetooth.
2 There wasn't things like cellular devices, unless
3 you wanted to hold a really heavy brick in your
4 hands while you were talking. Those things were
5 just ideas back then, and developed over the years.

6 So our technology today, and basic
7 telecommunications today, in my opinion, is much
8 different than it was in the '90s. The regional
9 distribution centers developed into centers to help
10 us at FTRI to reach the public, both through the
11 equipment distribution program and through
12 outreach. We contract with deaf service centers,
13 Centers for Independent Living, speech and hearing
14 centers. Easter Seals is one of our regional
15 distribution centers. And we also have, over time,
16 partnered with various hearing aid providers,
17 medical service providers and audiologists, and
18 whoever we can find to help us get the word out and
19 to provide training.

20 The medical service providers, obviously they
21 are not a contracted service. We just partner with
22 them, as well as some of the audiologists and
23 hearing aid providers. But the regional
24 distribution centers, we do contract with them on a
25 per service type of fee to help get the equipment

1 out to people, train the people on it, answer any
2 questions that they have, as well as reach out to
3 the community in their area to provide information
4 and referral. Some them refer information about
5 other types of programs, because the regional
6 distribution centers provide other services.

7 Centers for Independent Living, we -- FTRI
8 program is only a portion of what they do, as well
9 as speech and hearing centers, just as an example.

10 The other types of outreach that we provide,
11 we utilize newspapers, local community newsletters,
12 print advertising and direct mail. We utilize
13 digital platforms across the board, and we have
14 vendors that we use.

15 Our outreach manager works with different
16 vendors who specialize in those types of areas to
17 help us get the best use that we can out of digital
18 formats, as well as our print media.

19 And, you know, I really look forward to having
20 even more discussions, I hope, with the Commission,
21 and with the Commissioners and with staff, to look
22 at what we can do to modernize TASA, bring things
23 up to 2021 since we are -- we are 30 years since
24 TASA was signed and put into place. And I look
25 forward to, you know, how we can work forward --

1 you know, work together going forward.

2 If you have any questions, please let me know.
3 I am happy to help you both now and if there is any
4 questions in the future.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Mr. Bascom.

6 Commissioners, do you have any questions?

7 We will start with Commissioner Fay.

8 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 And I will probably have some questions at the
10 end that I think may be appropriate for both Mr.
11 Bascom and the RDCs, but this question was in
12 particular so I get a better understanding of
13 course, because you come to -- FTRI comes to the
14 Commission with that budget, and it's a docketed
15 item, you and I haven't been able to communicate
16 about the budget and those sort of things, and this
17 public venue is really only one of the
18 opportunities we have do so. So I was just hoping
19 maybe you could give me an understanding about the
20 organization, the structure of the organization,
21 and kind of what a typical daily operation looks
22 like for what you intake and what you handle there.

23 MR. BASCOM: Right. Right. Thank you for
24 that question.

25 FTRI has an executive director as well as

1 three managers. We have a business manager,
2 myself, we have an outreach manager, and we have an
3 equipment distribution program manager. And each
4 of the managers oversees either administration and
5 finance, in my area; or the outreach program, our
6 outreach manager handles all those types of
7 activities; and the equipment distribution program
8 manager handles working directly with the regional
9 distribution centers as well as directly with
10 clients providing troubleshooting, providing
11 information to those clients and training them
12 directly, or through the regional distribution
13 sense.

14 We have a program where the regional
15 distribution centers have the ability to get with
16 us on a GoToMeeting or other ways -- before COVID
17 we actually were able to meet with them sometimes
18 and train the regional distribution centers on the
19 phone equipment itself, how it works. Now we have
20 to, through the COVID pandemic time period, do a
21 lot of that, you know, through GoToMeeting and
22 whatnot.

23 So we are always available to provide the
24 information and training that the regional
25 distribution centers need to help the clients in

1 their area.

2 The process is a client would fill out and
3 sign an application, either directly on-line
4 through our website or through one of our regional
5 distribution centers, and that would be the first
6 step in providing -- for us to provide equipment to
7 them. They send that application in. It's usually
8 certified by a physician or a deaf service center
9 or regional distribution center executive director,
10 as well as others that are listed in TASA that
11 allows for certification of those applications.
12 And that gets sent into FTRI, and we provide
13 equipment either directly to that client, ship it
14 to them directly, or they go to the regional
15 distribution center, or one of our outreach events
16 that happens to be a distribution event at the same
17 time, and they get their equipment there as well as
18 training.

19 So that's kind of a brief synopsis of how a
20 client gets a piece of equipment and gets training
21 on that equipment.

22 FTRI additionally goes out to events. Our
23 outreach manager would go out to events to provide
24 information to the public and work with other
25 organizations to help get the information out about

1 the relay service and FTRI.

2 And we specifically worked with Jeff Branch at
3 Sprint and the relay provider to do certain
4 specific activities that might help get the relay
5 service information to the citizens of Florida.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: I appreciate it. Yeah, I
7 appreciate that.

8 Mr. Chairman, just one quick follow-up to Mr.
9 Bascom's response if that's okay.

10 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes, sir.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Bascom, you mentioned
12 the process of the application, where you intake
13 that from the consumer. I spent some time on your
14 website just looking to see kind of how it operates
15 and what forms of communication you have on there,
16 and one thing I was trying to figure out, and I did
17 look at some other states, is that you have got
18 kind of -- you have got a toll free number on
19 there, and then you have got some communication
20 numbers for those who want to use specialized
21 devices to reach out to the Commission, and an
22 email address on there. But during normal business
23 hours, I presume there would be, like there is with
24 a lot of entities these days, a chat function. So
25 if you had an individual -- and we are just being

1 realistic here -- an individual who has a speech or
2 hearing disability, when their only options are to
3 call or send an email, it didn't seem to make a lot
4 of sense to me. So is that chat function something
5 you guys have considered, and is it something you
6 will consider?

7 MR. BASCOM: Certainly could consider it. I
8 am not as familiar with other states and how they
9 are using chat specifically. I haven't heard very
10 many of the states discuss that during meetings
11 with them and whatnot, but I do know we use email
12 quite extensively when working with clients. They
13 seem to really like communicating with us through
14 email. We collect emails when someone calls, we
15 always ask if he would can communicate with them by
16 email in the future for follow-up and checking to
17 see if their equipment is working properly. A lot
18 of the clients like to communicate by email, and we
19 have a lot of that when they leave a message -- we
20 have a answering machine type system here at the
21 office that if someone calls us after hours, they
22 can leave an email, and we are happy to communicate
23 with them by email that way.

24 But specifically on the chat idea, I think
25 that's a great idea. We do have a chat system that

1 we work with the regional distribution centers on,
2 and they can ask us questions via a chat any time
3 during the day, and that seems to work real well
4 for us as well, but I like that idea.

5 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah, is it usually friends
6 or family that reach out by toll free number on
7 behalf of an individual, is that -- is that how
8 that's used?

9 MR. BASCOM: A lot of times it is a family
10 member calling us, you know, requesting
11 information, or requesting us to send an
12 application to them, requesting additional
13 information about the program, it's -- quite often
14 it is a family member, yes.

15 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay. Great.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's all I have
17 for now.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.
19 Commissioner Brown.

20 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you.

21 And thank you, Commissioner Fay, for bringing
22 this to the Internal Affairs and for this important
23 topic.

24 And, Mr. Bascom, Mr. Thomas or Ms. Johnson we
25 are going to hear from, we talk about modernizing

1 the process and the equipment. Is there any
2 suggestion that you have, any of the three of you
3 have to help modernize this program?

4 MR. BASCOM: One of the -- one of the
5 things -- this is Brett Bascom speaking.

6 One of the things that I think would be
7 beneficial is if -- you know, I know in the past,
8 when we've discussed this, it's always a question
9 of what can we do within Chapter 427 as it
10 currently is written. And, you know, I don't know
11 if we can get a grassroots effort involved. It
12 seems to be that that is the way everybody believes
13 that the law needs to be changed to incorporate
14 newer types of technology. But the newer types of
15 technology are, you know, just like we are
16 communicating right now, via GoToMeeting, I am on a
17 smart phone. That is basic communications these
18 days.

19 We need to look at that and what that means
20 for the different communities that we serve, both
21 deaf and the hard of hearing and the speech
22 impaired. Those are quite specifically different
23 communities that can access the new technologies in
24 much different ways than we do, as a hearing
25 person, and they rely on it as basic communication

1 these days.

2 When someone, you know, looks at a cell phone
3 that they are going to purchase, well, you know,
4 that's something different for us than it is for a
5 deaf individual who is in their thirties or forties
6 and a deaf individual who is 70 years old. They
7 have different income and different family
8 situations, all those things, I think, need to be
9 taken into consideration as we look at the law and
10 modernize it, if we can modernize it. I hope we
11 can.

12 COMMISSIONER BROWN: I couldn't agree more
13 with you on that. And I appreciate your
14 recommendation about the grassroots.

15 Refresh our -- my memory. Does -- do -- does
16 FTRI have a lobbyist or have they retain -- I know
17 you have a retainer of a lawyer or any of the other
18 associations with the deaf and hard of hearing?

19 MR. BASCOM: FTRI specifically, we have legal
20 counsel. However, in my understanding, after all
21 these 20 plus years I have been here, is FTRI is
22 not -- I don't know how to say this other than not
23 allowed to, or not encouraged to lobby or do
24 anything in that realm of political environment.

25 So, no, we do not have a lobbyist

1 specifically. However, I believe many of the other
2 types of agencies, like Centers for Independent
3 Living, Deaf Service Centers, they have possibly
4 more of an ability to get together with a lobbyist
5 and/or a representative from the Legislature to
6 maybe get a bill passed, if not at least just
7 suggested, and work with them directly. And we are
8 happy to provide whatever information we can, and
9 what our board and the Public Service Commission
10 allows us to do.

11 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you.

12 And we have a former legislator on here that
13 might have questions, so I will be interested in
14 hearing his.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. BASCOM: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Before we do that, Mr.
18 Fogelman, you are trying to interject here?

19 MR. FOGELMAN: Thank you. Thank you very
20 much, Commissioner.

21 So I just wanted to note that, you know, I've
22 kind of been preparing and reviewing the Florida
23 Statutes. There is -- and as far as the annual
24 report is concerned, there is a line in here that
25 says that where the Legislature is looking to the

1 Commission for potential changes.

2 As far as this annual report, it says:
3 Proposals for improvements or changes to the
4 Telecommunications Access System. So that might be
5 a vehicle to the extent the Commission wishes to
6 provide some thoughts into how the system should be
7 updated we could do. We haven't usually gone that
8 route. We haven't proposed anything, but it
9 certainly seems like the statute envisions the
10 Commission making those kind of suggestions.

11 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great. Thank you, Mr.
12 Fogelman.

13 Anything else, Commissioner Brown?

14 COMMISSIONER BROWN: No, thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Commissioner
16 LaRosa.

17 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chairman. And thank you also for this great
19 presentation.

20 And I will follow up on Commissioner Brown's
21 comment. Mr. Bascom, does anyone -- are there any
22 individuals within FTRI's organization or any board
23 members on boards of other -- excuse me -- of other
24 outside organizations, you know, hard of hearing
25 organizations either state or nationally?

1 MR. BASCOM: I do not know of any board
2 members, FTRI board members, who have indicated to
3 me that they are on a board like that. I would
4 obviously let them answer that directly. I am not
5 aware of any board members that are on a board like
6 that.

7 I do believe board members have in the past,
8 and if not presently, have been on the board of --
9 the 911 board for Florida, but, no, I am not aware
10 of any other associations like that.

11 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Sure. Yeah, and the
12 reason I am going there with that question is, you
13 know, do you guys, are you guys communicating to
14 different organizations who typically would then
15 come before the Legislature and lobby for changes,
16 or inform them of what may be happening within the
17 industry, which I know -- (inaudible) --

18 MR. BASCOM: Yeah.

19 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: -- conversation.

20 MR. BASCOM: Right. Not actively. We make
21 ourselves available to anyone who needs information
22 to do that type of activity. However, you know, we
23 don't currently go out and seek, nor do we sit on
24 my boards.

25 The only community activity that we do is

1 actually a national activity. There is the
2 Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program
3 Association that FTRI was actually a charter and
4 founding member of. And nationally, all state
5 programs who want to be part of that -- TEDPA is
6 the acronym for that -- who want to be part of that
7 do and we normally, other than the COVID pandemic
8 situation, have an annual conference where each
9 state program who does the similar activity that we
10 do here, get together and share ideas. And there
11 is a lot of discussion about other states and how
12 they have acclimated themselves to the newer
13 technologies, how they've worked with their
14 legislatures.

15 So we do have some ideas that we can pull from
16 them, however, you know, there is quite a few of
17 the states that have moved forward and already done
18 those things, and maybe we can contact them and
19 find out more information. If it's available for
20 us to move forward that direction, I would be happy
21 to contact the TEDPA members and find out more
22 about that.

23 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Well, I would be
24 curious to see how, you know, how the changes will
25 affect the individual state programs and, you know,

1 whether there are benefits or whether there are
2 hurdles that may ultimately been in front of them.
3 So that would be great if, at some point in time,
4 we could get an update on that hear more on kind of
5 what's happening from the national perspective.

6 MR. BASCOM: Right.

7 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Another question
8 related tot he report that you guys provided and
9 kid of also going towards a modernization idea
10 on -- I see where distribution dropped
11 dramatically, I think it was like 15,000 from the
12 year prior to, like, 9,400 approximately in this
13 last count between '19 and '20. I also see where
14 applications have dropped significantly. I think
15 you quoted, like, 43 percent that had dropped.

16 You know, this might be some of the -- an
17 obvious question, but what are some of the reasons
18 for that? Is technology bringing down the cost of
19 equipment? Is it more accessible and reachable
20 through other means? Do you mind just expanding a
21 little bit on that?

22 MR. BASCOM: Right. One of the first things
23 that comes to mind between the 2019 fiscal year-end
24 and 2020 fiscal year-end would be COVID that
25 impacted us dramatically. March of 2020 through

1 June of 2020 things dropped off quite rapidly, so
2 that's part of the situation.

3 Looking back more historically over two or
4 three years, yes, the request for various types of
5 equipment have changed over the years. Text
6 telephones for the, you know, the TTYs for the
7 deaf, I mean, they just don't use them anymore.
8 They use cell phones and iPads and video relay and
9 technologies like that. So new applications for
10 deaf individuals are very few and far between.

11 We do a lot of replacement of broken TTYs that
12 need to be repaired because there are people still
13 using them, and there is quite a, as a -- we still
14 have a relay service out there who is providing
15 great service through the Sprint Relay, and we do
16 notice that it goes down on a pretty consistent
17 basis minute-wise, but there are still people using
18 it.

19 Volume control phones for hard of hearing
20 individuals have gone down; because of the types of
21 equipment people don't use that equipment as much
22 anymore because even 55, 60, 65, 70 year olds who
23 are the most -- are susceptible to being hard of
24 hearing, they use -- they use cell phones as well,
25 and so those items aren't as needed as they used to

1 be.

2 So we've transitioned, as I mentioned, in the
3 types of equipment that we offer. Some of our
4 equipment, one in particular I would like to
5 mention is Clarity XLC8, which FTRI helped develop
6 with Clarity, who is the manufacturer of that
7 phone, and that has -- it's a regular cordless
8 telephone, but it also has a handset that operates
9 as a dect unit, which communicates with the base of
10 that telephone, but it still is plugged into the
11 wall. As Richard Tutor told me one time, who is an
12 older -- for those of us who remember Richard, he
13 was a Commission staff member at the time, told me
14 if you can plug it into the wall and call the pizza
15 place down the street, it's an analog line and, you
16 know, it's a landline.

17 So that phone still operates under that type
18 of idea; however, the handset is not only dect
19 capable, it's also Bluetooth capable. So it not
20 only communicates with the base of that phone, but
21 if somebody has a cell phone, they can connect to
22 that too. So it will take phone calls from a cell
23 phone or your regular phone line that goes into the
24 wall. And people set it up that way, and they can
25 have volume control and still plug it into the wall

1 and still have a regular phone line.

2 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Okay. Great.

3 Excellent. Thank you, and I appreciate it.

4 MR. BASCOM: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner La
6 Rosa.

7 Other Commissioners have questions?

8 All right. We still have a couple more folks
9 to present. I believe we have Jeff Thomas,
10 Director of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of
11 Florida on the line.

12 Jeff, are you there?

13 MR. THOMAS: Yeah, I am trying to come up
14 here.

15 Good morning, everyone.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Good morning.

17 MR. THOMAS: Thanks for allowing me to join
18 your meeting. I don't want to be too repetitive
19 with what Brett told you.

20 A brief history. Deaf and Hard of Hearing has
21 served Pasco and Hernando County since 1983. We do
22 touch into northern Hillsborough and northern
23 Pinellas, but we are strictly a small 501(c)(3)
24 that serves the deaf and hard of hearing. I think
25 you will hear from the Center for Independent

1 Living, you know, larger organizations that have
2 deaf programs within their organizations.

3 The funding is hard for the deaf and hard of
4 hearing. There is no state funding -- separate
5 state funding or federal funding, so we rely on a
6 lot of local funding and the FTRI contract that we
7 have, and we've had since inception, 1991,
8 extremely helps the agencies. There is not that
9 many of us any more in the state, if you are
10 familiar with any of them, that allow that funding.
11 Some of us, you know, we struggle but we, you know,
12 we continue to stay afloat.

13 When I say small, you might be thinking but,
14 you know, you are -- we've had budgets in the
15 200,000s, but it's lower now because of COVID
16 unfortunately. But we have other programs other
17 than FTRI that serve the deaf. The Tampa Bay area
18 happens to be one of the largest deaf populations
19 in the U.S. So we have been very fortunate, and I
20 have, being small but I do have four employees, but
21 basically they are part-time but they are all
22 fluent signers so we are able to help a lot of the
23 deaf population our area.

24 But one thing we've tried to do with our
25 elderly population, because, you know, I know you

1 have had a lot of questions, but in my mind,
2 that's -- the elderly hard of hearing is the ones
3 that are extremely hard to help, and they are the
4 ones I think in most need. You know, why? Well,
5 No. 1, most of them can't get here. And No. 2, you
6 know, I just don't have the funding and the
7 employees for us to go see every one of them, even
8 though we try our best.

9 But we've had programs to kind of bring them
10 together with their families. I know you have
11 asked -- one asked a question about family members
12 that call. We do get a lot of calls from family
13 members through for the phones, but, you know,
14 we've had classes with them, or gone to their
15 nursing homes and their ALFs, and you might think
16 this is not really funny, but we teach them basic
17 sign, because it's something that's really helped
18 the elderly population with their families.

19 But that's a whole new subject. That's
20 another program we have, and -- but with FTRI,
21 this -- I know you asked the questions, but I have
22 been here 16 years, and I was a for-profit
23 volunteer board member for a five or six years
24 before that, so I have been here about half the
25 time that the agency has been open, so I have seen

1 a lot of changes that Brett was referring to.

2 I mean, we used to have four or five people
3 walking in every day wanting to talk about the
4 phones, but that doesn't happen any more, and I
5 think you can probably see that with the numbers.
6 You know, cell phones and people living longer,
7 healthier lives, but people getting rid of their
8 landlines, it's really affected a lot of what we
9 do.

10 But, you know, the phone that Brett was
11 telling you about, that's one option that I hope we
12 can continue to have, because, believe it or not, a
13 lot of these elderly hard of hearing that I am
14 talking about that can't come to us don't have
15 landlines any more. So we are really strapped.

16 I mean, I know a lot of their family members
17 put them on their cell phone plans, but they're, I
18 hate to say it, a lot of them are very clueless
19 when it comes to the cell phone. Now, you know, we
20 have cell phone amplifiers, and hope we continue to
21 have.

22 Now, can they use those? Well, it takes a lot
23 of training and it takes a lot of time, but it's
24 something that, in my mind, has to be done. Now,
25 it's harder to, you know, to distribute a lot of

1 equipment when you have to do a lot of it hands-on
2 with these elderly, but that's -- I mean, I look
3 at -- Brett could look at his numbers and see the
4 age group that we have been helping the last two or
5 three years. And you can see, it's not people in
6 their fifties. It's people in their seventies and
7 eighties. A lot of them are still very vibrant.

8 COVID has hurt tremendously since March. I
9 mean, I don't have to tell any of you that. I
10 think every RDC has taken a different approach.
11 Some of them, I know, are still staying fairly
12 aggressive. I have not. Of course, I am older
13 but, you know, my employees are all hard of hearing
14 or deaf. Some of them have, you know, other
15 disabilities. So I have not -- I have not gone
16 out, especially to nursing home or ALFs until this
17 thing can get cleared up.

18 It's affected our bottom line, sure, it has.
19 But even when we apply for other numbers or, you
20 know, I have United Way from Hernando and Pasco
21 that's been very good to us. Knowing that we have
22 that FTRI program is huge. I mean, we've helped
23 thousands of people over the years, you know, with
24 that program.

25 I know Brett said, we can't really use them as

1 a tool to go out and get money, you know, to offset
2 anything with FTRI. That's not allowed, but it's
3 just that, you know, if any of you have ever
4 written grants or worked with non-profits on the
5 grants, you know, sometimes unfortunately it's a
6 numbers game. So, you know, with all the people
7 have we have been able to help, with FTRI it's so
8 beneficial.

9 Like Brett said, with RDCs, you know, we sign
10 a contract every one to two years with FTRI, so
11 that's how it works. And you can see the budget
12 with FTRI, and probably see their expenses, and
13 expenses is, you know, helps agencies like us,
14 because when we distribute equipment, you know, the
15 contract pays us, which, you know, keeps us afloat,
16 which helps unbelievable.

17 Now, there is 20 some RDCs, I believe, I think
18 so. Brett, you can tell me if I am different. But
19 we all, you know, do our best and serve our
20 individual communities.

21 One question you asked that might end up
22 asking, you know, we have a -- the deaf, the hard
23 of hearing agencies within the state, like I say,
24 there is probably only half a dozen of us now, we
25 had an organization that's still -- it's still a

1 valid organization. I happen to be the treasurer
2 so I did keep it afloat. But we tried -- we've
3 tried over the years to, you know, to try with
4 legislators and everything, and it's -- I guess my
5 best answer is I guess we are not very good at it.
6 We don't have a lot of money to, you know, pursue
7 it a lot. We've tried and haven't been very
8 successful. So basically down to our local area,
9 the local legislators just to keep them advised
10 what's going on and, you know, solicit their help
11 in any way we can.

12 So I will leave it at that. You probably got
13 questions, and we can go from there.

14 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
15 much, Mr. Thomas.

16 Any questions for Mr. Thomas? Commissioners
17 have questions?

18 All right. Well, stand by, Mr. Thomas, I am
19 sure we are going to come back at the end with some
20 other questions.

21 Next up, Jane Johnson, Executive Director of
22 Florida Association for Centers for Independent
23 Living.

24 Ms. Johnson, are you on -- there we are.

25 Welcome.

1 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you very much, and I
2 really appreciate this opportunity, so thank you
3 for allowing me to share our perspective from the
4 Centers for Independent Living.

5 And as you mentioned, I represent the Centers
6 for Independent Living around the state. The
7 centers are federally funded nonprofit
8 organizations. They were established back in 1973.
9 And the purpose of the -- the purpose of the
10 organizations is to serve all disabilities and all
11 ages.

12 We -- Centers collectively serve all 67
13 counties in Florida. They receive federal funding,
14 so I look at them as sort of infrastructure for
15 people with disabilities. It's -- you can almost
16 liken it to a state highway system for people with
17 disabilities. We've got all of the counties
18 covered so that everyone has access to a place
19 where they can come regardless of their disability,
20 regardless of their age, and receive services.

21 Most of the Centers for Independent Living are
22 or have been regional distribution centers for FTRI
23 over the years, which is why I am on the call
24 today, because we've been working with FTRI for the
25 past about year-and-a-half, because the business

1 model that is available to the Centers for
2 Independent Living -- I am getting a message on my
3 screen, is that -- okay.

4 CHAIRMAN CLARK: We lost you. There you are.

5 MS. JOHNSON: I apologize.

6 So -- so the Centers have been regional
7 distribution centers with FTRI, but the business
8 model that was made available to them was really
9 kind of unworkable in terms of it -- because as
10 volume has decreased, the -- it's a fee-for-service
11 system that's been set up so that the Centers have
12 to put a staff person, an assigned staff person and
13 set floor space in their centers and do travel to
14 do the outreach, but the reimbursements did not
15 cover the costs. So all of them are losing money
16 on the -- on the relationship, but they continue
17 doing it because it's part of their mission.

18 As I said, Centers for Independent Living have
19 an overarching mission. And as I have been
20 listening to the discussion so far, I have been --
21 what I am noticing is that we have been focusing a
22 lot on the what and the how of FTRI, but not the
23 why. And I would like to just kind of go back to
24 that and remember why FTRI was established to begin
25 with, which -- and as I read the statute, it was

1 established to expands telecommunications access to
2 all Floridians. And in my mind, that means to
3 create a seamless system for people who are deaf
4 and hard of hearing so they have access. And the
5 Centers for Independent Living are committed to
6 that same mission. That's what they do.

7 They have five core services that they have to
8 provide under federal law, which include
9 independent living skills training, which would be
10 learning how to use devices and technology so that
11 you can live as independently as possible.

12 Peer mentoring, by law at least 51 percent of
13 every employ and board member of a Center for
14 Independent Living has to be a person with a
15 disability themselves, so they are authentic
16 consumers of disability services, and so the staff
17 have lived experience with deaf necessary, with
18 paraplegia, with all sorts of disabilities but they
19 bring a very personalized and specialized
20 perspective to the consumers who come to them.
21 They provide transition services and advocacies.

22 So again, these are all -- these are federally
23 funded programs, so they exist out there. They are
24 infrastructure already.

25 During when the COVID epidemic started, they

1 were considered essential providers, so they could
2 not shut down. They went virtual, but they were --
3 received funding through the CARES Act to upgrade
4 their electronic and on-line platforms so that they
5 could deliver services virtually. So they are
6 all -- as of April of last year, they have been in
7 the process of upgrading their ability to
8 communicate with all Floridians with disabilities
9 on a variety of platforms.

10 Most of them also partner with the Florida
11 Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology,
12 which is the state assistive technology program, so
13 they can also demonstrate and provide assistive
14 technology for people with disabilities.

15 So say all that to just kind of help you
16 understand that there are some redundancies in the
17 current service delivery models and this is in all
18 industries, not just in the disability community,
19 but I think there is some redundancy between what
20 the Centers for Independent Living are already
21 doing and what FTRI is doing.

22 And what I would love to talk about is how we
23 can better integrate existing programs to leverage
24 what's already there so that we can deliver the
25 services more effectively and more -- with fewer

1 barriers; because as I said, the Centers are
2 established in their communities. They serve every
3 county. They are essential providers. So during
4 COVID they actually became more busy. They did
5 everything from delivering meals to people who
6 couldn't drive, to getting people to and from the
7 store, to they've moved a lot of their training and
8 education modules on-line, and they serve, you
9 know, young children all the way through to older
10 adults.

11 They also provide durable medical equipment.
12 So if a person who is deaf and hard of hearing were
13 to come into a Center for Independent Living, they
14 wouldn't just look at their presenting disability
15 of deafness or hard of hearing, they would look at
16 the whole person and, you know, address those
17 needs, those communication needs, but also do --
18 they have to do an intake and assessment, and they
19 would do a 360 view of the person and make sure
20 that all of their needs are met.

21 So, you know, I would ask the question, is
22 this program, as it was envisioned by the
23 Legislature, as consumer centric as it can be? And
24 are there things that we can do to make it more
25 consumer centric so we are not just focusing on

1 equipment and delivery systems, but we are focusing
2 on our customer, which is people, the people we are
3 trying to serve? And are we leveraging all the
4 assets that are out there to make sure that that
5 consumer's needs are being met in the most holistic
6 way possible.

7 And so I really appreciate the opportunity to
8 share the perspective for the Centers for
9 Independent Living, because FTRI has been a really
10 important partner to them. But we've all witnessed
11 the evolution of technology, and we all know the
12 landlines are becoming a thing of the past unless
13 you are a business or, you know, a state agency.

14 But the Centers for Independent Living are
15 able to help people with whatever technology they
16 choose to work with, so they don't have to move
17 them to an FTRI phone. They can say, well, if you
18 want to use a cell phone, here's how you can do it.

19 They also have, you know, they can teach them
20 how -- they can offer programs with a sign language
21 interpreter on the program. All of our programs
22 usually include a sign language interpreter, but
23 they can show them sort of the other world of
24 access options in addition to FTRI.

25 And I think that that's important because

1 people who are deaf and hard of hearing shouldn't
2 have to be consigned to a specific program if there
3 are other options available to them. I think that,
4 you know, we should open the door to everything,
5 every opportunity. That was the reason -- that's
6 sort of the why behind FTRI, was the whole premise
7 behind the law when it was created was -- or
8 acknowledging that people who are deaf and hard of
9 hearing should not have limitations just because of
10 that disability. They should have the same access.

11 And I would say -- we, the Centers, would say
12 we believe that is still true, and even more so
13 when it comes to technology, that it should be any
14 technology that they choose to use so that they can
15 live as independently as possible, and they can
16 have the dignity of making their own choices.

17 So I just want to offer myself as a resource.
18 I would -- as I said, I have been working first
19 with James Forstall and then Sean Bankston until he
20 are resigned, to try to come up with a better way
21 for the Centers for Independent Living to partner
22 with FTRI.

23 We are still committed to that. This is a
24 really important service, and so I just -- again, I
25 offer the Centers as a resource. We have -- we

1 have infrastructure that's already funded, so I
2 think you can -- there is a lot that can be done
3 leveraging that without having to look at
4 additional expenses. I think we -- you know, I
5 think there is a way to do more with existing or
6 even less resources than we are currently doing.

7 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much, Ms.
8 Johnson.

9 Commissioners, do you have questions for Ms.
10 Johnson?

11 Commissioner La Rosa.

12 COMMISSIONER LA ROSA: Thank you, Chairman.

13 And this is more of a comment. That's, what
14 Ms. Johnson just mentioned is kind of where my
15 questioning was going earlier, and basically what
16 are the recommendations that maybe the Center
17 believes could make the process more efficient,
18 that gives us an opportunity maybe to talk to FTRI.
19 I am not necessarily suggesting that we be the
20 conduit, but if we -- if we've got to approve the
21 budget and we've got to look at, you know, some of
22 the operational policies, then why not consider how
23 we can modernize things.

24 So not necessarily a question, but thank you,
25 Ms. Johnson. And that's kind of where I was going

1 with asking the question as far as the relevance
2 should FTRI sit on any other board, or is there a
3 level of communications, and seems like there is,
4 just maybe kind of -- (inaudible) -- a little bit
5 more, so thank you.

6 MS. JOHNSON: And if I can respond.

7 I did want to also go on the record. I am a
8 registered lobbyist and so I can do -- I can
9 advocate with the Legislature on behalf of this
10 issue. Although, in reading the statute, I don't
11 see the limitations, and that may just be my -- I
12 am not on an attorney either, so it may be my
13 interpretation, but I do see that the statute
14 encourages FTRI to be forward-thinking when it
15 comes to the technology that can be used. So I
16 think there is a lot we can do without even having
17 to amend the law.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you very much.

19 Commissioner Fay.

20 COMMISSIONER FAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 And thank you, Ms. Johnson, for taking the
22 time to educate us on some of what you do. I do
23 think it's really important when you look at the
24 model of FTRI and the RDCs, there are really two
25 different structures, one of the specific function

1 related to deaf and speech, or deaf and hard of
2 hearing, and then, of course, the Independent
3 Center, which is a holistic kind of approach and
4 review of what services are provided.

5 And I think, you know, the limitation has been
6 the funding component in that organization to, are
7 the registered RDCs, it sort of has to be
8 worthwhile to them, and I think we have seen
9 sometimes it's not.

10 One question that I had for you, and it might
11 be appropriate for FTRI and other speaker too, but
12 it's really this idea that the federal services for
13 those with disabilities, specifically speech and
14 hearing, have expanded significantly, and what's
15 occurred with that is the use of broadband and
16 internet services.

17 And from my discussions with folks at the FCC
18 in just broader sort of education on the services,
19 it appears that the quality of service for -- just
20 for example, a caption tel -- an analog landline
21 caption telephone service compared to an IP CTS, a
22 broadband caption telephone service. The broadband
23 service seems to be more reliable and potentially
24 better quality. And what it does is it creates a
25 structure where the consumers are receiving a

1 resource that's then being funded by the federal
2 government and their appropriations. And of
3 course, through the ADA, there are funds to make
4 sure that those services are provided. Ms. Johnson
5 probably could speak better than most knowing that
6 you work through a federal funding mechanism for
7 your own operation.

8 What I see happening with that transition is
9 you essentially are moving someone on to a better
10 quality of service, which I think is important. I
11 think long-term it puts them in a position to have
12 some adaptation with technology. So if they are
13 stuck to the analog line and there is advances in
14 the phone technology, they might be very limited
15 just because of the limited investment, the limited
16 R&D on the analog caption phones.

17 And then what it's doing is it's freeing up
18 money based on the fact that there are less
19 intrastate minutes being used, which are then
20 billed back to FTRI through Sprint and the relay
21 service provider.

22 So what it has the possibility of doing is
23 allowing more of the funding of FTRI going to the
24 RDCs, or going directly to the consumer benefit and
25 allowing some of the federal services, which are

1 arguably better, to pick up some of that need on
2 their end.

3 So do you have any thoughts on maybe how that
4 process would work or if -- and I will argue
5 against myself a little bit just to be helpful
6 here. There might be just the reality the
7 accessibility to broadband and/or smart devices so
8 limited that these individuals wouldn't be able to
9 get this type of access. But if they are, it
10 seems -- the transition seems to make sense.

11 So maybe if, Ms. Johnson, if you had some
12 thoughts on that, and then I would love to hear
13 from other speakers too, Mr. Chairman, if that's
14 okay.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Certainly.

16 MS. JOHNSON: I do think that most people are
17 moving towards broadband-based communications and
18 technology. And one things the Centers for
19 Independent Living can do when they advocate for
20 people for everything from transportation to
21 housing and communication, so if a person doesn't
22 have access to broadband, they can work with them
23 to try to ameliorate that; or if they don't -- if
24 they are not comfortable, then they can, with a
25 telephone, then they can help train them.

1 So I don't see that as a barrier. I see it as
2 an opportunity. And, you know, again, I keep going
3 to try to step back from this whole program,
4 because I am relatively new to this compared to
5 Brett and to Jeff, but, you know, how do we define
6 success for FTRI? Do we define it by devices, or
7 do we define it by consumer outcomes and consumer
8 access? Is that -- is our goal to serve the
9 consumers so that everything that we do should be
10 focused on that, or is what our goal to deliver on
11 a model that was created, you know, quite a long
12 time ago, and look at those outputs?

13 And I think if you were to look at it from a
14 consumer standpoint, we can meet a consumer where
15 they are today, but I think we also have sort of a
16 moral and civic obligation to help move them to the
17 future as well, because -- and especially in the
18 case of disasters, not so much COVID, but
19 hurricanes is another area where the Centers for
20 Independent Living, we call it a seat at the
21 Emergency Operations Center, but we -- the Centers
22 become very involved with pre and post disaster
23 response on behalf of people with disabilities, but
24 making sure that we know where those folks are in
25 the community that aren't going to hear something

1 on the radio or television, making sure we can find
2 them and communicate with them in a way that's
3 accessible is a key priority for the Centers for
4 Independent Living.

5 But those are the sort of things that if
6 someone is stuck on keeping an analog phone but it
7 could put them at risk during a disaster, of course
8 the Centers are going to try to advocate and work
9 with them and explain in a way that's very consumer
10 friendly, because they -- you know, most of them
11 have several employees who are deaf and hard of
12 hearing themselves, so they can have a peer-to-peer
13 sort of explanation and coaching about why it makes
14 sense.

15 I apologize, that's a long-winded answer,
16 but --

17 COMMISSIONER FAY: That's okay.

18 Do Mr. Thomas or Mr. Bascom have anything?

19 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I am sorry, Commissioner Fay,
20 could you repeat that?

21 COMMISSIONER FAY: I was saying Mr. Thomas or
22 Mr. Bascom, if Brett or Jeff had anything to add, I
23 would love to hear from them too.

24 MR. BASCOM: Yeah. This is Brett Bascom.

25 I just want to add that I think that whole

1 idea that Jane brought forward of how do we define
2 success with FTRI, and combining that with the
3 modernization of TASA and maybe defining, you know,
4 although the mission of FTRI wouldn't particularly
5 be redefined, but how we, you know, apply our
6 processes, procedures, budgets, how we reach out to
7 everybody and inform the citizens of Florida about
8 the program.

9 And, yeah, we've had conversations in the past
10 with -- I have been in those meetings with Jane, as
11 well as FTRI has worked with Fast and tried to
12 talked with them how we can partner together.

13 I think redefining what FTRI, what we would
14 look at as success in reaching the citizens of
15 Florida and how we serve them, I think that would
16 be a integral part of how we redefine and modernize
17 TASA.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great.

19 Mr. Chairman, I have one or two more
20 questions, if that's okay.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yes. Go right ahead,
22 Commissioner Fay.

23 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great.

24 So the other concept that has been discussed a
25 little bit, and I think Brett -- Mr. Bascom

1 mentioned that you have the communication through
2 the toll free number through FTRI, and then of
3 course the RDCs have some communication with people
4 through their area.

5 It seems like, once again, the ability to
6 communicate through telecommunications services is
7 limited for those individuals, especially until
8 they are able to get a device that enhances their
9 ability to do so.

10 And so one thing that I did look at was the
11 Department of Children and Families has something
12 called Access Florida, and it's sort of a holistic
13 approach looking at what services might be
14 available, and you can go into their system, input
15 some information and it will direct you as to what
16 service you might be able to access based on that
17 information. So one thought that I had was, you
18 know, assuming somebody is looking for information,
19 and it's not normal business hours, and they are
20 not able to directly chat or speak with somebody,
21 how do they -- how do they get information back to
22 decide what may be available to them?

23 And that access Florida -- and I sort of call
24 it a portal, but what it essentially does is when
25 you input that information, it spits you back

1 information about what you can -- what you can
2 access.

3 And so I don't know if FTRI or the RDCs have
4 considered working together to maybe connect with
5 the Department of Children and Families or any
6 other entity that is investing in that on-line
7 information, access to information.

8 So just for example, if it was after hours,
9 they went and input some information and it said,
10 you may qualify for a caption telephone service.
11 Here is your regional distribution center, or here
12 is an entity that you can reach out to to find that
13 information.

14 It seems to me that providing that access then
15 allows somebody who even maybe is accessing
16 broadband through the internet or through a public
17 location, they can still get the immediate feedback
18 that they may need to proceed on accessing the
19 services that they want.

20 So I was wondering maybe if -- and that might
21 be directed at you, Mr. Bascom, but I am wondering
22 if that's something that FTRI has looked at or
23 thought about as far as providing that instant
24 information to a consumer?

25 MR. BASCOM: Yeah, Commissioner Fay, that's a

1 great -- a great resource that I think, you know,
2 we could look into a little bit more.

3 FTRI has partnered with 211 as a referral
4 service in the past, and continues to do so. We
5 look for those types of partnerships wherever we
6 can. That's kind of a, more of a broad type of
7 resource that we can use in the future, and I will
8 definitely put that out there with our management
9 team and our executive director to get in touch
10 with them and see how we can partner with them.

11 One of the other things that we have done in
12 the past is we've kind of been really
13 demographically focused in our outreach and
14 information sources. And this is something that we
15 might need to look at, is doing more of a broad
16 type of resource that we can work with. So thank
17 you for that information.

18 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great.

19 And I think staff could probably help you get
20 some of those contacts within the agencies that
21 we've communicated with just to make sure you are
22 able to connect with them. So thanks for
23 committing to go do that.

24 I didn't know if Mr. Thomas had anything
25 before I went on to my last question, Mr. Chairman.

1 I don't see him, so I am going to go on to my last
2 question.

3 MR. THOMAS: I mean, I am listening.

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Okay.

5 MR. THOMAS: I have been listening.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: I'm making sure you didn't
7 have anything to add, Mr. Thomas. I didn't want to
8 leave you out.

9 MR. THOMAS: I would have jumped in.

10 I mean, when you were talking about broadband,
11 of course we all know, it's here, and that's the
12 future, and it definitely helps a lot of the
13 clients that we help. We -- you know, being
14 hands-on, we continue to get a lot of calls for the
15 caption phone. Of course the one in the FTRI
16 program is not through the internet, which is
17 really the one that's best to use because they can
18 caption both ways.

19 The only -- it's not really a negative, but
20 the only drawback, I think there is places that are
21 giving out the internet-based caption phones, or it
22 seems to be a lot of people are getting them that
23 don't really need them. So I think that's where
24 training comes into a huge issue when it comes to
25 the caption phones to make sure that, you know, the

1 right person is getting the right equipment. And
2 that's hard to do sometimes because you can't
3 really get in front of everybody, so...

4 COMMISSIONER FAY: Mr. Thomas, just to
5 interject there.

6 So if those consumers had better information,
7 do you think they would be able to decide what
8 might be most helpful to them? Because your
9 comment that they might be getting the device that
10 isn't most helpful to them, that sort of directs
11 this idea that, you know, the vendor provides the
12 device and, of course, then they paid for the
13 minutes that are used on the device.

14 I mean, do the vendors have any sort of
15 structure where they are incentivized to direct the
16 consumer away from their own phone to something
17 that might be more beneficial or a better fit?

18 MR. THOMAS: I don't believe so. You know,
19 Brett might answer that best, but I -- just in my
20 experience in my area, you know, we've -- we
21 continually try and contact those representatives
22 to let them know if that's not the right piece of
23 equipment, call us and we will get them the right
24 piece of equipment, you know, we will meet with
25 them, but we very seldom get calls. That hasn't

1 necessarily been the case the last few months
2 because of COVID, but I know those minutes are paid
3 for federally and, you know, in the back of your
4 mind, you know, if we can save any money, we can
5 save some money.

6 But, no, to answer your question, yes, I
7 think, you know, most people aren't getting
8 properly trained. That's part of our job with the
9 phone, with the equipment that we have, and I feel
10 we do a pretty good job of.

11 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah. I appreciate that,
12 because I think to your point, if everyone is
13 operating with the common goal of providing the
14 best service and the most -- the largest quantity
15 of services to those who need it, the question then
16 comes, is it better for that funding to be directly
17 provided in a way that helps that consumer but
18 potentially would be harmful to an R&D's funding
19 structure?

20 And I think that's -- that's a really tough
21 decision to make, yeah, so I don't know if your
22 structure, you know, if the funding that's provided
23 through FTRI is removed and provided in some direct
24 to consumer service, is that harmful in a way -- do
25 you have other funding mechanisms? Because it

1 sounds like a lot of what you do, you are not even
2 really receiving enough funding to support all of
3 the services you are doing anyway. So you are kind
4 of operating in the red to a certain extent.

5 MR. THOMAS: It's -- we have a, you know, we
6 have a lot of consumers to help. There is a lot of
7 deaf and hard of hearing that's overlooked
8 unfortunately. I mean, that disability is very
9 difficult, if you have ever had it, or family
10 members that you know have it.

11 But it's -- but I say, it's overlooked. It
12 has been for years. It probably will continue that
13 way, but, you know, that's life and you do the best
14 you can. But if -- you know, personally if you
15 didn't have RDCs to help with the equipment and
16 everything is done through a central source just by
17 mail, people aren't going to use the equipment. I
18 hate to say that because they are not going to know
19 how to use it.

20 I know it's a telephone, but you got to
21 remember a lot of these people are older, and we
22 continually get calls that we have to help our
23 clients because, you know, a lot of them live
24 alone, you know, and they don't know what to do.

25 But yes, if the RDCs weren't involved, that

1 would save money, yes, but it would be a nightmare
2 on the training issue on the equipment.

3 COMMISSIONER FAY: Yeah, I appreciate the
4 feedback. Thank you.

5 MR. THOMAS: You're welcome.

6 COMMISSIONER FAY: And, Mr. Chairman, just one
7 last question. I appreciate the time.

8 I know there has been some discussion about
9 the Commission, and I guess what you referred to as
10 smart devices, or new technology that could be used
11 in various ways to resolve some issues.

12 As I mentioned before with the example of the
13 caption telephone service and the IP CTS, there is
14 a chance that you essentially are moving services
15 that are currently billed through the state
16 interstate minutes to broadband, which is funded
17 from the federal programs. And obviously, that
18 does create some cost savings; however, I think the
19 reality is that those devices and access to
20 broadband are both required for those services to
21 become available, and so I know various states have
22 looked at the expansion of smart devices to be
23 included in their equipment distribution.

24 I will say, I think Florida, on its face,
25 deserves some credit. There is a lot of states

1 that have no equipment distribution programs, and
2 so we are already, to a certain extent, providing a
3 service beyond what other states have provided.

4 But I do think technology then interjects a
5 discussion or debate as to should the shift of
6 equipment that's being distributed be more towards
7 smart devices?

8 And one thing the Department of Elder Affairs
9 did, there is the program called the Vital Program,
10 and it's something that the Governor and the
11 Department of Elder Affairs implemented when COVID
12 hit, and they essentially worked with the provider
13 to get smart devices to different elderly
14 facilities, and they were able to use profiles on
15 those devices to then access communication and
16 other resources for those individuals.

17 I couldn't believe I hadn't heard more about
18 this. It's an amazing program. The benefits are
19 significant, and that type of access to fund these
20 devices is simplified from some of the more
21 complicated tech. I know people think of iPads and
22 sort of the typical smart devices, but these are
23 much more user friendly in a way that it's
24 beneficial.

25 And so I think there is one thing that FTRI

1 can consider, at least look at in communication
2 with the RDCs, is, you know, is there a way to
3 intake devices as a nonprofit to then have them
4 redistributed to folks who may need them? And I
5 just -- I will give an example. I won't speak to a
6 specific provider because I don't want to appear
7 that I am picking one that's better than the other.

8 But if you just took an old smart phone that
9 somebody goes out and buys their new updated smart
10 device. They've got the older device. The
11 provider offers them 100 bucks for it. And instead
12 of trading in that old device for \$100, they donate
13 it to FTRI to be used -- to be distributed or used
14 by someone who would have the benefits from that,
15 assuming they have some cell phone or broadband
16 access.

17 That puts us in a position where arguably it's
18 a much different scenario than going through a
19 broader, more complex and complicated discussion
20 about funding the purchasing of those devices.

21 I know last year we saw some discussion about
22 the significant costs that come with, especially
23 some of the high end devices. And I think what
24 this commission has proven, and I really, I have
25 got to give a lot of credit to Commissioner Brown,

1 in that we see these budgets come forward and there
2 is just so much discussion and debate as to each
3 component, and it's not because we want to make
4 things complicated for FTRI, or we want to make
5 things harder on the distribution of these
6 programs. It's because we know every dollar that's
7 spent on one thing is a dollar less that goes
8 towards those services. And I think that's why you
9 see such a commitment to getting that right.

10 I think we, as a commission, really need to
11 think hard about ways that we can be supportive of
12 FTRI and these types of services going forward.
13 And I think this concept of looking at ways to
14 bring in those -- that new technology, and bring in
15 devices through relationships, networks,
16 communications I think is key, because then it
17 doesn't limit us to restructuring a program that
18 might -- that might have those smart devices
19 distributed.

20 Because I will say as much as I think that's a
21 great idea, I have talked to a lot of states, and
22 some of them have said it's been very successful.
23 Others say it's complicated, and when a device
24 breaks, you have to figure out what to do with it.
25 There is a lot more moving parts I think than can

1 be presented on its face.

2 So I don't know if the RDCs or FTRI have any
3 thoughts on looking at ways that don't require an
4 entire rewrite to shift kind of the cost
5 distribution, but would allow some efforts to
6 really, at the end of the day, minimize the intake
7 that FTRI is dealing with.

8 If they are able to get consumers on devices
9 that satisfy their needs that are reliable, that
10 reduces the burdens on them and the RDCs. And I
11 think that's really key to addressing what the
12 consumer needs with the limited resources that we
13 have. Because we know they are going to be
14 limited, so we just have to find more
15 cost-effective and efficient ways to have that type
16 of distribution.

17 So if you have any thoughts, and I am opening
18 that question to any of the RDCs, or Mr. Bascom.

19 MS. JOHNSON: This is Jane Johnson, if I can
20 respond.

21 The Centers for Independent Living all do
22 equipment repurposing or refurbishment programs,
23 and depending on the center, the equipment runs the
24 gamut from a cane or a walker to power wheelchairs,
25 shower chairs, all kinds of assistive devices that

1 a person with a disability might need.

2 They take that equipment in. They use their
3 CARES Act dollars to buy sanitizing equipment, so
4 they can sanitize the machines and make sure they
5 are good to go. They partner with organizations in
6 the community doing any repairs or, you know, just
7 getting the equipment up to speed.

8 So they are already doing that with a lot of
9 technology and hardware and durable medical
10 equipment, so I think that that is an area that I
11 think that they could move in.

12 I know that just, as you -- all of us on the
13 phone have probably gone to Goodwill in the past,
14 but most equipment donations happen locally, not
15 statewide. So I think I -- if you were to explore
16 this, I would definitely encourage you to
17 decentralize it so that, at the local level,
18 people, when they are upgrading a phone, can drive
19 by a Center for Independent Living or a deaf and
20 hard of hearing center, drop off their equipment
21 and just it's ease of access for everyone.

22 And then again, because the Centers can
23 theming train the individual on how to use the
24 device, but then also -- I was just looking at the
25 website for one of our programs in Jacksonville.

1 They have a deaf and hard of hearing social hour
2 that they -- where they convene people together.

3 So it's -- I really want to emphasize the
4 importance of serving the whole person and not just
5 their telecommunication need, but, you know, all of
6 their needs so that they can live the best life
7 possible. Telephone communication is one piece of
8 that, but empowering them in other areas also, I
9 think, is important because none of us are just one
10 of our senses.

11 So anyway, I think that the Centers for
12 Independent Living have a demonstrated capacity --
13 I know they have a demonstrated capacity to do
14 this. We are doing it for the Brain and Spinal
15 Cord Injury Program right now for people who
16 acquire a spinal cord injury or a brain injury,
17 where they will -- they actually contract with us
18 to deliver refurbished equipment so that the
19 program doesn't have to buy it brand new, because
20 there is an awful lot of equipment out there that
21 gets -- when people pass away, or they have an
22 injury and they no longer use the equipment, they
23 are anxious to donate it and have it go to good
24 use.

25 So I think that's a wonderful idea, and there

1 is -- like I said, there is a lot of technology out
2 there waiting to be donated somewhere.

3 COMMISSIONER FAY: Great. Thank you.

4 Mr. Chairman, that is all I have. I
5 appreciate all the time, and really appreciate the
6 speakers for taking the time. I think it will be
7 an ongoing discussion for -- for me at least, and I
8 am sure my colleagues feel the same way, but that
9 does seem like there is some openness to moving
10 forward and potentially finding areas, at least in
11 the immediate short-term, that we can make some
12 progress on, so thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you, Commissioner Fay.

14 Any other Commissioners have anything before
15 we move on?

16 All right. Commissioner Brown.

17 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Just a quick comment, and
18 really just great gratitude for this dialogue. I
19 think it's super important, and I appreciate
20 everybody's willingness to listen and participate,
21 and again, thank you, Commissioner Fay, for
22 spearheading this dialogue.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you for those comments,
24 Commissioner Brown. I agree wholeheartedly.

25 And just as a reminder to Commissioners,

1 Commissioner Fay is one of the first Commissioners
2 to take advantage of my offer. I do want to
3 encourage any Commissioner who has a program, idea
4 or area that they would like expanded explanations
5 or detailed presentations on to please let us know.
6 We would like to arrange to do one of these at each
7 IA. So if there is an area that you have a
8 specific interest in and would like for us to
9 explore deeper, please let us know so that we can
10 get it scheduled for the next IA.

11 This has been very beneficial, very eye
12 opening. I have learned -- I made a half a page of
13 notes over here of things that I would like to get
14 some more information on and look deeper into
15 myself. So again thank you, Commissioner Fay, for
16 your leadership in this arena.

17 All right. With that being said, let's move
18 on. We are going to have our legislative update up
19 next, and, Mr. Potts, you are recognized.

20 MR. POTTS: Hi, how are you?

21 So session is coming up fast. This is the
22 final week of interim committee meetings week. And
23 then there is a week off, and session will begin on
24 March 2nd.

25 The Chapter 120 fix that was discussed at the

1 November IA meeting is in bill drafting in the
2 House and Senate and is moving forward.

3 I wanted for a second, I know there has been
4 some curiosity as to how things are working
5 downtown with COVID. So if you noticed on the
6 weekly calendars I sent out, out to the side of the
7 meeting notice -- of the meeting room, there is an
8 A1, an A2 or an A3 on the Senate meeting. So those
9 are actually rooms at the Civic Center that they
10 are doing kind of a telecast thing, where that's
11 where the public can go and give testimony and be
12 heard.

13 In the Senate -- so in the Senate, they are
14 using three committee rooms, and that's how they
15 are splitting up, and then -- so they are doing
16 three meetings at a time -- at one time, so it's
17 more spread out.

18 The other thing is that, in the Senate, all
19 individual meetings with the senators have to be
20 virtual at this time.

21 So in the House, they are doing it a little
22 differently. They have four committee meeting
23 rooms they are using, and they've -- and splitting
24 their committee meetings in half. One week will be
25 one set and the other will be the next set.

1 There, you can be in person, but there is a
2 reservation system set up, and there is -- and you
3 have to be there two hours before, even if you have
4 a reservation. Individual meetings they can have
5 in-person, but they have to be approved by the
6 Speaker's office.

7 So I just had a few questions, so I wanted to
8 share that stuff. It's a very different session in
9 a very different time, working bills and it's a lot
10 more phone calls and Zoom meetings.

11 As for, you know, if there is any questions on
12 specific bills, we will be more than happy to meet
13 with you or your staff. Please reach out to us.
14 We are happy to talk to you.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Thank you very
16 much, Mr. Potts.

17 Any questions for Mr. Potts this morning?

18 All right. Seeing none, General Counsel's
19 report, Mr. Hetrick.

20 MR. HETRICK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
21 morning, Commissioners. I have no report at this
22 time.

23 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. That's a quick,
24 concise one. We like that.

25 Next up in our Executive Director's report,

1 let me just, I guess, tee this issue up.

2 I have asked Executive Director Baez to I have
3 give us a little bit of an update this morning
4 relative to what's going on in other parts of the
5 country as we are experiencing in our area,
6 Commissioner Brown, dropping temperatures. I know
7 you are nice and cozy down there, but it is a
8 little bit cool up here this morning, and I think
9 some folks have expressed some concerns about what
10 has occurred over the last 24, 48 hours in Texas,
11 Oklahoma and Kansas, they are experiencing a series
12 right now of rolling blackouts. And there has been
13 several potential problems that have occurred, not
14 only with the upcoming more potential for ice
15 storms that could cause physical damage, but the
16 lack of generation resources that they have
17 on-line.

18 I asked Director Baez if he could talk a
19 little bit about what has caused some of those
20 problems, especially relative and helping folks to
21 be able to understand how Florida is in a different
22 situation than, in this particular case, than Texas
23 and some of the other states, what were some of the
24 specific problems, and how do we compare to where
25 they are just to give our folks in Florida some

1 reassurances about the reliability of the Florida
2 grid system.

3 So with that, that's as teed up as I can get
4 you, Director Baez. You are recognized.

5 MR. BAEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good
6 morning, Commissioners.

7 To your question, the short answer is I think
8 we are in different and better shape in Florida
9 because we are -- we have our vertically integrated
10 utilities. We do have a planning process that
11 provides for reserves in good numbers.

12 Right now, what we are hearing, and I will
13 pass it on to Mark in a short moment. We've heard
14 from Gulf their base are looking good in terms of
15 reserves. They don't have a peak at the moment
16 that reaches anywhere near -- they are not -- they
17 are not in a critical event on that shape -- in
18 that shape.

19 We've also heard from FRCC for Peninsula
20 Florida, which, although, we are not as concerned
21 about. As Commissioner Brown has informed us, the
22 temperatures are looking pretty good and they are
23 not expecting, but certainly officially from FRCC,
24 they are not expecting, certainly were not issued
25 any warnings and they are not expecting any adverse

1 weather.

2 There are -- I don't know, Mark, if you have
3 something to add.

4 MR. FUTRELL: Mr. Chairman -- thank you,
5 Braulio. Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Mark Futrell
6 with staff.

7 Just a quick add-on, certainly it is a cold
8 day today, as you said, Mr. Chairman. Thankfully
9 those temperatures are going to moderate as the
10 week progresses, but we are in a very position than
11 those areas in the plains and those areas west of
12 us that are experiencing, not only extreme
13 temperatures, but prolonged extreme temperatures.
14 And historically that's when we've experienced
15 similar types of issues, where you have these
16 extreme temperatures that go on for multiple days
17 that can affect heat demand and present challenges
18 to the industry to meet customer needs.

19 So as Braulio said, what we are hearing from
20 the industry this morning is that there are no
21 impacts on electric generation or transmission in
22 the state. We are seeing tightening of the gas
23 supply system, as you can imagine, because of the
24 prolonged temperatures in the plains in the midwest
25 and the northeast, but they are monitoring that

1 situation closely.

2 We have the luxury of backup on-site fuel
3 supplies for most if not all of our fleet, and they
4 are ready to make those transitions, if needed.
5 But for right now, the supplies seem adequate, but
6 certainly as you can imagine, folks are using gas
7 because of the prolonged and extreme temperatures.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Have we seen any effect on
9 the current prices? I looked this morning Henry
10 Hub prices were about 340, I believe, BTU. Take us
11 back two weeks, what was the price two weeks ago on
12 natural gas?

13 MR. FUTRELL: I'm afraid, Mr. Chairman, I
14 can't answer that right here and now, but I can get
15 back to you and the others today, but I imagine
16 there is certainly -- you can impact there has been
17 some impact from increased demand.

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Yeah, I think that's one of
19 my concerns, is as we continue to rely on natural
20 gas for our production of electricity in the state
21 of Florida, we continue to become much more
22 susceptible to the changes in prices, and consumers
23 are going to see that over the next coming months
24 as these prices, even if it's for a short period of
25 time. Sure, there is some built-in elasticity

1 there, but in general, over the short-term, we are
2 going to see some increases in costs.

3 So I do have some concerns, and also some
4 concerns regarding reliability of the generation
5 resources that they are using in some of use areas.
6 I do think that in other states, where they have
7 alternative generation sources that are causing
8 some problems right now not meeting all much the
9 reliability needs in the state. And so it's just a
10 continued caution for us to, as we move forward, to
11 exercise great caution and care and concern in
12 establishing the generation resources in the state.

13 Mr. Baez.

14 MR. BAEZ: I just wanted to point out that a
15 lot of the -- a lot of the information that we are
16 getting in terms of reserve and available capacity,
17 their reported of net -- net of renewables --

18 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Net of renewables, yes.

19 MR. BAEZ: -- in another way that Florida is
20 in a little bit better shape.

21 And I also wanted to point out that to the
22 extent that we start seeing spikes in fuel prices,
23 natural gas prices as you referred to, I think the
24 Commission does have midyear correction mechanisms
25 that sort of flatten the spike, if you will --

1 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great point.

2 MR. BAEZ: -- sooner rather than later. So
3 hopefully it doesn't get to that, but the companies
4 are -- there is, like, a 10-percent trigger that
5 would probably take place in the summer if
6 necessary. That doesn't always happen, and we are
7 not expecting it to at this point. Time will tell.

8 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Commissioners, I will give
9 you just a moment if you have any questions for
10 Director Baez or our staff regarding this issue.

11 Commissioner Brown.

12 COMMISSIONER BROWN: I'm so happy that you
13 brought this up, Mr. Chairman. And some of our
14 colleagues in Mississippi and Texas have kind of
15 sent some communications about, and concerns, about
16 the rolling blackouts, brownouts, and it is -- you
17 know, I think Texas, of course, is a different
18 marketplace than Florida, but Mississippi, I
19 thought, was vertically integrated similarly, and
20 they are having the extreme weather.

21 I also want to point out, I stand corrected,
22 60s, like, high 60s here, although it feels like
23 mid-80s to me, at least, in my body, but is there
24 anything that we can do is we sit in this with our
25 southern colleagues to help provide resources, or

1 input, or anything that staff thinks that we can do
2 to help assist our sister states?

3 CHAIRMAN CLARK: I will say I did notice this
4 morning that a couple of the utilities had pointed
5 out that they were sending some additional
6 resources in, manpower to assist with, I guess in
7 some of the cases where they were having outages
8 due to the ice storms and the related things. But
9 in terms of policy, procedure assistance, Director
10 Baez, I will rely on you for that.

11 MR. BAEZ: Nothing of that sort comes to mind.
12 But, yes, I agree. I think those mutual assistance
13 agreements are two-way streets, and this is, you
14 know, these conditions would be one of them.

15 CHAIRMAN CLARK: And I may be stepping a
16 little out on a limb, Mark, but in the Panhandle of
17 Florida, the grids are also interconnected -- the
18 grid is also interconnected, I know into Alabama
19 and into Mississippi as well. So I am certain that
20 there are some resources that are being dispatched
21 out of generation stations in Alabama and possibly
22 even the Panhandle that are being diverted into
23 those areas is that a fair statement?

24 MR. FUTRELL: That that's fair. Things are --
25 generations are coordinated across that system

1 still. So as need arises in different areas, the
2 flow can be coordinated and generation can be
3 ramped up and down to meet certain needs in certain
4 areas of the region.

5 COMMISSIONER BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 And another point just to point out NARUC
7 asked on a subcommittee of a committee, and we are
8 looking at and we are creating a manual to provide
9 resources to other states about different type of
10 events. Not just a pandemic, but extreme weather,
11 fires, it covers a gamut.

12 So we are supposed to have the manual produced
13 in May, but I think this is going to be a standing
14 committee that we absolutely must have Florida
15 representation on there for many years to come.

16 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Great observation,
17 Commissioner Brown. Feel free to give them our
18 playbook.

19 COMMISSIONER BROWN: I have.

20 CHAIRMAN CLARK: All right. Other
21 Commissioners have any questions regarding this
22 matter?

23 Mr. Baez, finish your report, please, sir.

24 MR. BAEZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 I just want -- a quick update on the EV master

1 plan.

2 On February 3rd our staff submitted the PSC
3 portion of the Electric Vehicle Master Plan to the
4 Florida Department of Transportation. FDOT will
5 incorporate our portion into a draft report that
6 includes information, not just from PSC but also
7 DOT and the Office of Energy at the Department of
8 Agriculture & Consumer Services.

9 DOT's responsibility is to engage with the
10 stakeholders at that point. In the coming months,
11 they will be eliciting comments from the public on
12 the draft report. And the final report is due to
13 the Governor and Legislature by June 30 of this
14 year.

15 And if y'all have any questions on our
16 portion, I want to say it's available
17 electronically, and I know it may have been
18 circulated already to the offices; but if anyone
19 has any questions, we would be happy to discuss it
20 with you.

21 CHAIRMAN CLARK: Thank you.

22 Any questions?

23 All right. I believe that concludes our
24 agenda for the day. Are there any other matters to
25 come before the Commission? Commissioners,

1 anything?

2 Thank you for your attentiveness today. It's
3 been a little bit longer than normal IA, but
4 certainly well worthwhile, great information, and I
5 appreciate everyone continuing to hang in there
6 with us.

7 So if there is no further business, we will
8 stand adjourned. Thank you very much.

9 (Proceedings concluded.)

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