

Antonia Hover

From: Ellen Plendl
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2022 4:10 PM
To: Consumer Correspondence
Subject: Docket No. 20220000
Attachments: U.S. is struggling to modernize the electric grid!; deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida; More FPL machinations!; FPL alleged unscrupulous consumer behavior!

See attached customer correspondence and reply for Docket No. 20220000.

Antonia Hover

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 13, 2022 9:55 PM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: U.S. is struggling to modernize the electric grid?!
Attachments: Why the U.S. is struggling to modernize its power grid.pdf

Saturday 13 August 2022 2200 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my ongoing deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida despite given unfettered access to elected and appointed government officials and agencies in the furtherance of policies and agendas in pursuing poorly thought out sourcing of energy resources and a decidedly anti-consumer stance with the rate-paying public across the board. Ongoing investigations continue undercover the long-standing practices by these captains of industry to extract ever larger fees and electrical rates to aggrandize their oversized ambitions by direct and indirect political arrangements in backrooms.

The attached documentation clearly indicates the ongoing conditions of the electrical infrastructure in Southern Florida in which the ratepayers are in harm's way.

Please place these observations and articles in the appropriate docket to underscore the overwhelmingly calculated cold-hearted manner that these captains seem to influence the very elected/appointed representatives that should, instead, be seeking to comfort their constituents day-to-day hardships to pay for the aggrandizement of these out sized economic sectors.

Thank you for your time in these matters and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Beatrice Balboa
1010 South Ocean Boulevard, Unit 1008
Pompano Beach, FL 33062-6631
USA

Why the U.S. is struggling to modernize the electric grid

PUBLISHED FRI, AUG 12 2022 7:45 AM EDT

Nathaniel Lee [WATCH LIVE](#)
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VIDEO 11:33

Why the U.S. power grid has become unreliable

KEY POINTS

Blackouts are growing more frequent in the United States.

Of the \$12.86 billion in grid-modernization investment under consideration, regulators only approved \$478.7 million during the quarter, according to the NC Clean Energy Technology Center.

Certain state and regional regulators often have political incentives to fight against changes to the power grid.

Those directly affected by grid-modernizations effort note that there are valid reasons to fight against such disruptive projects.

Blackouts are growing more frequent in the United States. The average American experienced [just over eight hours](#) of power outages in 2020, with overall duration of power interruptions in the U.S. [more than doubling](#) since 2015, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

“This is not because the grid has changed, but because there is so much greater threat from extreme weather,” said Alison Silverstein, an independent consultant at the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. “And the number of extreme weather events of every kind have increased significantly over the last decade, in particular.”

Despite the Biden administration’s effort to improve the situation, recent actions would suggest the federal government [lacks](#) the ability to enforce a grid modernization.

There were a total of [549](#) policy and deployment actions on grid modernization during the second quarter of 2022, but of the \$12.86 billion in investment under consideration, regulators only approved \$478.7 million, according to the NC Clean Energy Technology Center.

“Electricity systems are an area of shared federal and state jurisdictions,” according to Romany Webb, senior fellow at the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia University. “The fact that we have this split authority between the federal government and the states is one of the factors that contributes to the complexity of the sort of modernizing the grid and building out additional infrastructure.”

What’s more, certain state and regional regulators often have political incentives to fight against changes to the power grid.

“The state entities that regulate electric utilities are called state public utility commissions,” said Webb. “In some states, those commissioners are elected. So if we’re talking about making investments that are going to be really expensive and are

going to be increasing electricity bills, they might see a lot of pushback from customers about that and that might affect [the commissioners'] chances of reelection.”

Those directly affected by grid-modernization efforts say there are valid reasons to fight against such disruptive projects.

“We’re not opposed to solar, but it does not belong on farmland. It doesn’t belong in an agriculturally zoned area and it certainly does not belong on timberland,” said Susan Ralston, president of Citizens for Responsible Solar. “These projects are very destructive to the land and at the end of the day, we’re trying to do what’s right by our county. We’re trying to preserve the rural nature of our country and really convince our elected officials that the rural character is more important than caving into developers.”

Antonia Hover

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2022 11:26 AM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida
Attachments: Florida Power & Light tied to dark money used in 2018 Senate race.pdf; Request for state investigation into Florida Power Light _ firstcoastnews.com.pdf; Florida Democratic lawmakers call for Attorney General investigation into FPL.pdf; Democratic lawmakers call for Attorney General investigation into FPL.pdf; Daniel Uhlfelder said he'll investigate FPL on 'Day One' if he is elected attorney general _ Business _ miamitimesonline.com.pdf

Monday 15 August 2022 1130 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

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USA

Florida Power & Light tied to dark money used to help Sen. Keith Perry win 2018 race



[Andrew Caplan](#)

The Gainesville Sun

The long-kept secret of who funded an independent candidate's campaign to help ensure Republican state Sen. Keith Perry retained office has finally come to light.

Last week, the Miami Herald reported receiving a trove of documents, including emails, texts and financial records, showing that Florida Power and Light, one of the state's largest utility providers, was behind a nonprofit that bankrolled \$200,000 in dark money for former Gainesville city commissioner Charles Goston's state Senate run.

FPL and Goston's campaign had one mission: siphon votes from Democratic challenger and University of Florida physician Kayser Enneking. Doing so would give Perry the needed edge in a closely contested race that would help ensure Republicans kept control of the Florida Senate.

It worked.

Perry narrowly won his re-election campaign by about 2,000 votes, while Goston, a longtime Democrat-turned NPA, pulled about 4,300 votes.

The Gainesville Sun's award-winning coverage of the 2018 race showed that Republicans working on Perry's campaign also coordinated dark money mailers and TV ads in the Democratic primary race, in an effort to pin candidate Olysha Magruder against their client. When that didn't work, Goston's campaign saw a sudden influx of cash from similar sources, as well as GOP operatives.

Republican kingpin: GOP's 'best-kept secret'

Working with the enemy: Enneking complaint dismissed, linked to Republican operatives

In one instance, Gainesville-based political consulting firm Data Targeting, which Perry used for campaign advertising, paid for records from UF on behalf of Goston. Those records were then used in an ethics complaint against Enneking, which was dismissed.

Though The Sun reported that Republicans orchestrated behind the scenes, it largely remained unclear where the bulk of Goston's PAC money originated until the Herald's reporting.

Enneking says the outcome still stings four years later, adding that she likely won't seek public office again.

"It wasn't American and it's not democratic," she said. "It's just unbelievably disappointing that we have not lived up to our constitutional ideals."

FPL linked to Broken Promises funding

In fall 2018, after the primary election had passed, a political committee called Friends of Charles Goston popped up. Ernesto Martinez, a longtime Gainesville resident and Goston supporter, was listed as the group's lead officer.

Within weeks, the PAC received a \$20,000 donation from a shell nonprofit based in Washinton, D.C. The nonprofit, dubbed Broken Promises, then spent approximately \$115,000 on in-kind advertising for Goston's campaign over the course of a month.

It's unclear if Goston, who blamed local Democrats for losing his seat on the Gainesville City Commission, ever knew the origins of the funding. He made clear he didn't care what others thought.

He regularly defended the campaign tactics, telling The Sun that "dark money is not illegal" and "voters don't have a right to know anything." Goston was unavailable for comment due to health reasons.

Records show Goston's PAC had its first donation from Broken Promises on the same day the group was created by "Sean Anderson," a mystery man to many. The nonprofit's mailing address led back to a UPS mailbox, though a store employee previously told The Sun that neither the nonprofit or Anderson had a box in their name at that location.

More: Complaints filed against Goston

Due to its nonprofit status, Broken Promises didn't have to disclose its funding source, making tracing the origins of funds nearly impossible. What's more, the nonprofit had yet to file a tax form with the Internal Revenue Service at the time of The Sun's investigation.

IRS filings now show the nonprofit in 2018 received \$200,000 and had \$161,000 in expenses. It also states the group used an Alabama address and claims its purpose was to “promote social welfare” and was “developing and advocating for legislation, regulations and government programs to improve social, environmental, economy and social environment.”

Subsequent years show the nonprofit received less than \$50,000, a benchmark that doesn't require disclosure of financial information.

Top utility officials denied any wrongdoing and told the Miami Herald that it had no records of ever paying Broken Promises. But documents leaked to the outlet directly connected FPL to Broken Promises.

The news organization reported receiving records stashed away in an internal server of the utility's former political consulting firm, Alaba-based Matrix. The records, which include emails, letters, texts banking statements and financial ledgers, “mark the clearest instance of FPL cash being directly linked to a series of election scandals rocking Florida politics,” the Herald reported.

But was it legal?

Campaign laws allow FPL to contribute to political campaigns — and it frequently does.

Campaign finance records show the utility donated more than \$230,000 to the Florida Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee during Perry's 2018 run. During that same time frame, the committee put \$242,000 toward Perry's re-election bid.

But federal and state laws forbid the corporation from using other people to use “straw donors” in its name. Nonprofits also are not allowed to primarily engage in politics, which in this case it almost entirely did.

Adav Noti, a senior director and attorney with the Campaign Legal Center in Washington, D.C., and former attorney for the Federal Elections Commission, told The Sun in January 2019 that campaign finance laws are set up to prevent people from hiding behind such tax-exempt organizations.

Still, little action was taken to hold the groups accountable due to its mysterious setup.

In December 2020, the watchdog group Citizens for Ethics and Responsibility (CREW) filed a complaint to the IRS, citing The Sun's coverage. The group said Broken

Promises had violated federal law “by failing to properly disclose its political contributions” and “was being used as a pass-through for political contributions.”

Records reveal long-kept secret

Matrix employees kept detailed records of their activities, including a ledger of FPL’s political spending in the 2018 election cycle, according to the Herald.

Entries show FPL gave two deposits of \$100,000 each, making up all of Broken Promises’ revenue for the year. More than half of that was used on mailers for Goston, who, unbeknownst to many local voters, was exiting the local Democratic Party.

Texts suggest that then-Matrix CEO Jeff Pitts and FPL Vice President Daniel Martell had control of two other nonprofit groups run by Anderson, who was listed as a former Matrix lobbyist.

“Bottom line is we are the ones with the check books and in control (of the nonprofits) 100 percent,” Pitts told Martell in a text received by the Herald.

Pitts, who later left the firm in 2020 to start his own consulting company, is in a legal battle with Matrix founder Joe Perkins, as the two are suing each other.

The utility's desire to control the Legislature for its benefit isn't particularly new. Aside from recent efforts to influence news coverage, harass journalists and dwindle down newsrooms that may offer critical pieces on FPL, additional reporting shows it secretly tried to buy a municipal-owned utility, crafted legislation to keep control of the solar energy market and push rate hikes on customers.

More: FPL consultants secretly took command, control of Florida news website, reports say

Enneking is unsure what made her a target, other than being a moderate Democrat. She has never truly been outspoken against the utility industry, though she has advocated for progressive policies and the need for clean, renewable energy. She says she now wonders if FPL runs the Republican Party or vice versa.

“That's a lot of money from one special interest to have a very clear voice in the state Senate,” Enneking said. “(FPL) showed that they can swing a race by themselves. It impresses me how much power they have in this state.”

2018 Democratic primary race

The odds were stacked against Democratic candidates months before FPL involved itself with Goston's PAC, though dark money began flowing beforehand.

New reporting shows the utility — with the help of Republican operatives — also used similar tactics during the primary race when local activist Olysha Magruder faced off with Enneking.

Mass mailers and commercials began circulating to promote Magruder. The ads said they were paid for by the Liberation Ocala African American Council PAC, which had yet to register as a committee with the state when ads began airing.

The Ocala group's \$100,000 came from the nonprofit Mothers for Moderation, which also was funded by FPL, the Herald reported. And in 2018, records show the utility contributed nearly \$14 million to Mothers for Moderation.

There were repeated calls for Magruder — now a current candidate for state House — to denounce the ads and dark money, but she hadn't until the GOP ties were reported. She has repeatedly denied ever knowing the origins of funding and demanded an apology from Republicans who denied having any knowledge of the incident.

Three local TV stations ultimately pulled the ads following The Sun's reporting and a cease-and-desist letter from Enneking's campaign team.

More: GOP tied to 'dark money' in Senate D-8 race

More: State Senate candidate demands apology, TV ads pulled

Perry has maintained over the years that he knew nothing about the advertising for his campaign or his opponents.

"I don't coordinate, have knowledge, or plan with any of these groups," he told the Herald.

Calls for investigation into FPL, candidate campaigns

During 2018, multiple ethics complaints were filed against Goston regarding his campaign activity, though nothing stuck. One was kicked back as being "legally insufficient," while another was passed over by the elections commission.

There were growing demands from voters and elected officials for then-State Attorney Bill Cervone to investigate due to Goston and supporters running afoul of campaign finance law, some calling his actions fraudulent. However, Cervone, a Republican, said he wasn't interested in "political sour grapes" and that neither his office or a grand jury should be used for "retribution" simply because their candidate lost.

He later denied being presented facts or a complaint to act on, according to the Daytona Beach News-Journal. Gainesville resident Sam Collins, who filed one of the ethics complaints against Goston, previously told The Sun that he tried to present facts to Cervone's office but was turned away.

"To say something smells funny is easy, especially for folks who lost," Cervone told the News-Journal in 2021. "... I can't just go on some fishing expedition because the person who lost the election is upset."

Now, longtime Tampa Democratic Congresswoman Kathy Castor has asked the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate the utility over its use of dark money and reports that it sought to manipulate elections and coverage in its favor, the Herald first reported.

"Generally, electric utilities should operate in the public interest and it appears that FPL and its officers use dark money, pressure campaigns and illicit, and possibly illegal, activity to disadvantage the citizens of Florida," Castor wrote in a letter Thursday to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

No charges have been filed against anyone involved in the election.

Fears of similar moves would be made across the state

Following Enneking's loss to Perry, there was a growing fear that the tactic would be used more widely around the state.

Though having third-party candidates run to split votes is not necessarily new, using massive corporations and dark money have become an increasingly cheaper option for some.

In March 2021, Frank Artiles, a former Republican state senator, was arrested and charged with multiple felony charges after bragging about how he recruited a friend to enter a state Senate race and pulled votes from another candidate.

Data Targeting, Perry's go-to political strategy company, also was entangled in the case, as it paid Artiles roughly \$90,000 to be a consultant.

Artiles asked an auto parts salesman, Alex Rodriguez, to enter the race to pull votes from Democratic incumbent Jose Javier Rodriguez. Alex Rodriguez, hoping the last name would create confusion, pulled in 6,300 votes, giving Garcia a win by a mere 32 ballots.

More: Ghost candidates, dark money and a 'winning formula': Florida corruption case linked to Republican insiders

Artiles promised his friend roughly \$44,000 in all for his help. Some of Artiles' expenses related to his role were also turned into Data Targeting as expenses, the News-Journal reported. He was later charged with making multiple excessive campaign contributions and conspiracy to do so.

Investigators also have gathered documents to suggest Data Targeting played a role in the three state Senate races that included ghost candidates. Evidence from the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office shows Tallahassee pollster Ryan Tyson and political consultant Alex Alvarado to two political committees that funneled large sums of dark money into the ghost candidate campaigns in state Senate Districts 9, 37 and 39, the News-Journal reported. Neither the men nor the company has been charged with a crime.

Data Targeting offers candidates a one-stop shop for all things campaign-related. In 2019, The Sun reported how the organization has slowly propped itself up as one of the leading political consulting groups in the state, having helped elect more than a dozen of Florida's Republican senators and half of the state's Republican congressmen. Gov. Ron DeSantis and Rep. Matt Gaetz are among its list of clientele.

In 2020, the organization once again found itself heavily involved in state Senate races, as Democrats threatened to tilt the scales of power. The Florida Republican Senatorial Campaign Committee — run by Senate President Wilton Simpson — spent more than \$7 million on consulting, polling and advertising to Data Targeting.

The GOP has controlled not only the governor's office but the state House of Representatives and state Senate every year this century.

Request made for state investigation into electric utility Florida Power and Light

Four members of Florida's House of Representatives allege bribery, fraud, fake candidate schemes and campaign-finance violations in a letter to Attorney General.

Author: **First Coast News Staff**

Published: **8:00 PM EDT August 11, 2022**

Updated: **7:51 PM EDT August 12, 2022**



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Four members of Florida's House of Representatives wrote a letter Thursday to Attorney General Ashley Moody asking her to investigate alleged corruption, bribery, fraud, fake candidate schemes and campaign-finance violations perpetrated by Florida's largest electric utility Florida Power and Light.

In the letter, representatives Anna Eskamani, Carlos Smith, Yvonne Hinson and Joy Goff-Marcil allege FPL were behind fake candidate schemes in the 2020 election cycle with consultants invoicing FPL for over \$3 Million, spying on a journalist and elected officials, publicly smearing anyone who stood up to the company, attempting to bribe a Jacksonville City Council member, and selling liquor from a secret bar in Tallahassee without a liquor license.

First Coast News has reached out to FPL for comment.

Below is the letter in its entirety:

"Dear Attorney General Moody:

As monthly electricity bills have continued to increase across the state, Floridians have watched a series of utility-related scandals unfold in the media that all involve Florida's largest utility: Florida Power and Light. These scandals began with three "spoiler candidates" who ran in the 2020 election cycle to deliberately deceive voters, undermine democracy, and siphon away votes from legitimate candidates running in those same seats. But the scandals have extended far beyond that spoiler-candidate scheme.

In 2021, nearly a dozen members of Congress requested that the Department of Justice investigate these campaigns. Recently, Congresswoman Kathy Castor sent a similar request to the DOJ, and Florida law enforcement has filed multiple criminal charges concerning these fraudulent campaigns. Financial analysts have also taken notice of the ongoing scandals, with one investment firm downgrading its assessment of the company, citing concerns over lobbying practices.

Dogged journalism by the Miami Herald, Orlando Sentinel, and Florida Times-Union revealed that the only donor to support these spoiler candidates was a nonprofit called "Grow United," a political front group set up by consultants working for FPL. Those same FPL consultants have set up similar front groups and communicated extensively with senior FPL executives, including CEO Eric Silagy. These consultants invoiced FPL over \$3 million during the 2020 election cycle alone and used their front groups to carry out political campaigning activities, apparently in an attempt to hide any connection between FPL and the political operatives.

Most recently, Florida newspapers have reported that FPL consultants spied on a journalist in Jacksonville (in addition to spying on elected officials and state regulators) and that the same consultants financed and controlled a news/blog website in Tallahassee called The Capitolist. The Capitolist seems to serve as a platform to launder pro-FPL propaganda and smear anyone who dares to stand up to the company, spending thousands of dollars on social media advertising to promote its content. This spending is in addition to the millions of dollars in lobbying the company conducts, along with a secret bar it runs in its Tallahassee office.

There is ample evidence to suggest that FPL executives or consultants have acted illegally. For instance, Florida newspapers have reported that FPL's consultants attempted to bribe a member of the Jacksonville City Council who opposed selling the city's utility company to FPL, by offering the council member a six-figure job at a phantom nonprofit if he would resign from the council. Further reporting has shown that FPL executives -- including Silagy -- have personally directed campaign contributions be made on FPL's behalf out of dark-money nonprofits, in violation of campaign-finance laws. And it is unclear how FPL could sell liquor from its secret bar in Tallahassee since it does not have a liquor license -- or how it could give free drinks to legislators without violating Florida's legislative gift ban.

The corruption, influence peddling, and breaches of the public trust by FPL and its senior executives should be of grave concern. It raises significant questions about the potential of FPL using ratepayer funds to influence elections and undermine democracy through fake candidate schemes, astroturfing, and attempted bribes. It also exposes FPL's tactics to intimidate and smear journalists, elected officials, and members of the public who dare critique their practices.

FPL ratepayers deserve to know whether the money they are forced to send the utility every month to pay their bills was used to influence elections and undermine our democracy through fake candidates and other schemes, and whether FPL broke any laws in its quest for total political control of our state.

Therefore, the undersigned respectfully requests that the Florida Office of the Attorney General immediately investigate the concerns we've brought forth in this letter, pursuant to your guidelines and policies.

We look forward to your response.

Signed,

Representative Anna V. Eskamani, Florida House of Representatives District 47

Representative Carlos Guillermo Smith, Florida House of Representatives, District 49

Representative Yvonne Hinson, Florida House of Representatives, District 20

Representative Joy Goff-Marcil, Florida House of Representatives, District 49"

Florida Democratic lawmakers call for Attorney General investigation into FPL

“The corruption, influence peddling, and breaches of the public trust by FPL and its senior executives should be of grave concern.”

By [Renzo Downey](#) and [Florida Politics](#) on Thu, Aug 11, 2022 at 2:14 pm

[SEND A NEWS TIP](#)



Photo via [annaforflorida.com](#)

Anna Eskamani

Four Democratic lawmakers are calling on Attorney General Ashley Moody to investigate Florida Power & Light (FPL) following repeated scandals involving the utility company, Florida’s largest.

Reps. Anna V. Eskamani, Joy Goff-Marcil, Yvonne Hayes Hinson and Carlos Guillermo Smith said recent reports have exposed ample evidence of malfeasance at FPL.

The scandals began after the 2020 election with three spoiler candidates. But according to reports, FPL agents have attempted to bribe a Jacksonville City Council member, directed

organization and operated a secret bar in Tallahassee.

“The corruption, influence peddling, and breaches of the public trust by FPL and its senior executives should be of grave concern,” the quartet wrote.

“It raises significant questions about the potential of FPL using ratepayer funds to influence elections and undermine democracy through fake candidate schemes, astroturfing, and attempted bribes. It also exposes FPL’s tactics to intimidate and smear journalists, elected officials, and members of the public who dare critique their practices.”

The four question how FPL could sell liquor from its secret bar since it doesn’t have a liquor license. Additionally, the story sparked questions about violations of Florida’s legislative gift ban.

“FPL ratepayers deserve to know whether the money they are forced to send the utility every month to pay their bills was used to influence elections and undermine our democracy through fake candidates and other schemes — and whether FPL broke any laws in its quest for total political control of our state,” they wrote.

The scandals followed reporting by the Miami Herald, Orlando Sentinel and Florida Times-Union that began with three spoiler candidates funded by “Grow United,” which has been linked to FPL consultants.

Democratic Attorney General candidate Daniel Uhlfelder has slammed Moody for contributions made to her political committee that he linked back to FPL. Uhlfelder has also said he would investigate FPL on his first day in office.

Democratic lawmakers call for Attorney General investigation into FPL

Democrats say FPL ratepayers should know what their money has gone toward after recent scandals.

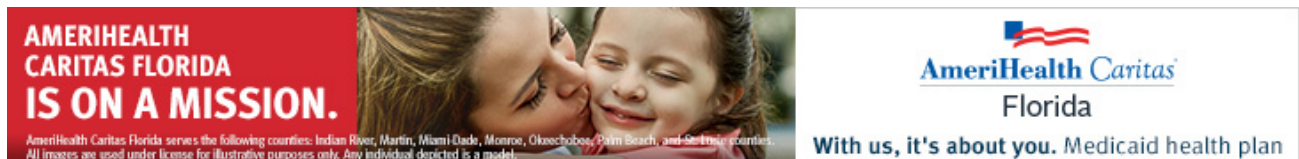
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Moodv's Press Secretary, **Kylie Mason**, told Florida Politics the letter has been



Renzo Downey

August 11, 2022

3 min

Anna Eskamani

Anna V. Eskamani

Ashley Moody

Carlos Guillermo Smith

Florida Power & Light

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Daniel Uhlfelder said he'll investigate FPL on 'Day One' if he is elected attorney general

Grey Rohrer FloridaPolitics.com Aug 9, 2022



Attorney general candidate Daniel Uhlfelder has garnered attention by dressing as the Grim Reaper.

(FloridaPolitics.com)

Daniel Uhlfelder, the Walton County lawyer who gained a modicum of fame dressing as the [Grim Reaper](#) to bash Gov. Ron DeSantis' COVID-19 policies, is donning the hooded black cape and grabbing his sickle again.

At least, he did for five minutes last week outside a Circle K on Thomasville Road in Tallahassee before a pair of police officers politely requested the [Democratic candidate for attorney general](#) and the handful of assembled reporters to leave the property.

Uhlfelder said he wanted to bring attention to high gas prices, insurance premiums and shady tactics of Florida Power & Light, and the lack of action by Attorney General Ashley Moody, a Republican.

“[FPL] needs to be investigated. On Day One I’m going to investigate Florida Power & Light,” Uhlfelder said after rattling off a series of FPL’s scandals in recent years, involving connections and payments to political consultants involved in a scheme to dupe voters through “ghost candidates” and trailing a Jacksonville columnist.

He shrugged off questions asking what the attorney general could do about inflation and high gas prices – the attorney general can investigate violations of price gouging by gas stations but only during a declared state of emergency, usually before a tropical storm or hurricane hits – by noting the vast powers of the office to investigate.

“People don’t understand the power of the attorney general’s office,” Uhlfelder said. “I plan to use the full weight of the attorney general’s office to investigate abuses by utility companies, insurance companies (and) developers who are jacking up rents.”

Before he can take on Moody in the general election, Uhlfelder must defeat former Orange-Osceola State Attorney Aramis Ayala in the Aug. 23 primary.

Uhlfelder argued his status as a resident in a deep-red swath of the state means he’s best positioned to face Moody in the general election.

“I am a North Florida Democrat. I know how to communicate with folks who may not agree with me,” Uhlfelder said. “I have great bipartisan appeal. I’m going to be talking about utilities, gas prices, rent, reproductive rights. ... Whether you’re Republican, Democrat or independent it’s affecting all of us.”

Uhlfelder also defended wearing the Grim Reaper outfit as he bids to gain coverage as the primary race heads into the final stretch.

“Would you all be here right now if I was not wearing this?” he asked the reporters.

Antonia Hover

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 15, 2022 4:52 PM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: More FPL machinations?!
Attachments: Insurers fail, schools stress, DeSantis jets and FPL's secrets emerge.pdf

Monday 15 August 2022 1700 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my ongoing deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial sector continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida despite given unfettered access to elected and appointed government officials and agencies in the furtherance of policies and agendas in pursuing poorly thought out sourcing of energy resources and a decidedly anti-consumer stance with the rate-paying public across the board. Ongoing investigations continue undercover the long-standing practices by these captains of industry to extract ever larger fees and electrical rates to aggrandize their oversized ambitions by direct and indirect political arrangements in backrooms.

The attached documentation clearly indicates the ongoing conditions of the electrical infrastructure in Southern Florida in which the ratepayers are in harm's way.

Please place these observations and articles in the appropriate docket to underscore the overwhelmingly calculated cold-hearted manner that these captains seem to influence the very elected/appointed representatives that should, instead, be seeking to comfort their constituents day-to-day hardships to pay for the aggrandizement of these out sized economic sectors.

Thank you for your time in these matters and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,
Beatrice Balboa
1010 South Ocean Boulevard, Unit 1008
Pompano Beach, FL 33062-6631
USA

FPL stock downgraded:After [months](#) of headlines documenting how Florida Power & Light has secretly sought to manipulate elections and bend news coverage in its favor, [one investment firm has downgraded its assessment of the electric utility's parent company](#), NextEra Energy.

Seaport Global downgraded its stock recommendation for NextEra to “neutral” from “buy,” citing “growing media scrutiny of FPL’s lobbying practices against distributed solar and retail choice.” The announcement came following [reporting by the Herald](#) documenting how FPL had secretly bankrolled and controlled the content of the website the Capitolist, using it to defend the utility, advocate for legislative favors and attack FPL’s critics.

FPL emerges as funder of 2018 spoiler:The Herald [also reported that FPL and its political consulting firm, Matrix](#), secretly financed a spoiler candidate in a 2018 race for a Gainesville-area state Senate seat, splitting the liberal vote and siphoning off enough votes from the Democratic challenger to swing the race to the GOP incumbent.

“This is pretty much the nightmare scenario,” said Saurav Ghosh, director of federal campaign finance reform at the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center in Washington, D.C. “You have a powerful corporate player in Florida politics using its financial resources to defeat a candidate without any disclosure to the public. ... This is election rigging.”

And its not over: Journalist Jason Garcia [writes that the hidden money games have continued](#) with big donors like FPL and the state’s largest sugar companies, U.S. Sugar and Florida Crystals. He suggests they are backing Nikki Fried over Charlie Crist in the Democratic primary for governor. More than \$1 out of every \$3 that Democrat Nikki Fried has raised into her political committee comes from donors whose identities have been deliberately hidden from voters, but Garcia also found some clues as to the sources. The same 13 dark money committees that worked closely with FPL’s political operatives in 2020 have given more than \$300,000 to Fried this year.

Antonia Hover

From: Beatrice Balboa <beatricebalboa@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2022 2:45 PM
To: Ellen Plendl
Subject: FPL alleged unscrupulous consumer behavior?!
Attachments: Some Northwest Florida customers are unhappy with FP&L's takeover of Gulf Power _ WUWF.pdf; Some insurance companies dropping Florida customers with solar _ firstcoastnews.com.pdf

Tuesday 16 August 2022 1500 hours

Ellen Plendl
Regulatory Consultant
Florida Public Service Commission
Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach
1-800-342-3552 (phone)
1-800-511-0809 (fax)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my ongoing deepest disappointment that the electrical utility industrial and residential sectors continues to mismanage the electrical infrastructure throughout the State of Florida despite given unfettered access to elected and appointed government officials and agencies in the furtherance of policies and agendas in pursuing poorly thought out sourcing of energy resources and a decidedly anti-consumer stance with the rate-paying public across the board. Ongoing investigations continue undercover the long-standing practices by these captains of industry to extract ever larger fees and electrical rates to aggrandize their oversized ambitions by direct and indirect political arrangements in backrooms.

The attached documentation clearly indicates the ongoing conditions of the electrical infrastructure in Southern Florida in which the ratepayers are in harm's way.

Below is the latest synopsis of the lengths that the captains of the electrical utility industrial and residential sectors are taking to fully seize the entire energy sector in the State of Florida for review and consideration:

FPL declared war on democracy. Florida must fight back

<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/opinion/editorials/os-op-edit-florida-power-light-silagy-election-interference-20220816-x47kvucxk5dnfmloxhb6tmbivm-story.html>

A firm tied to FPL interfered in elections in 2018 and 2020, spied on reporters, and turned an online news site into a propaganda outlet, all while the utility company hosted a secret bar in Tallahassee for legislators. Reporters at multiple media outlets turned up all of that. Someone with subpoena power must continue the work.

Florida Power & Light's president Eric Silagy told his well-paid secret political operatives to make a state senator's life a "living hell." Seriously. Maybe Florida should return the favor. In 2019, Sen. Jose Javier Rodriguez of Miami annoyed Silagy by proposing legislation that would have cut into FPL's solar energy business. FPL has not been formally accused of wrongdoing. But records uncovered and verified by the Sentinel show that the utility's political thugs conspired to promote a man named Alexis Pedro Rodriguez who'd allegedly been bribed by a former state lawmaker to run as an independent candidate against the bona

fide Rodriguez, even though the neophyte did not live in the district. The independent candidacy confused enough voters that Jose Javier Rodriguez lost to Republican Ileana Garcia by 32 votes. Alexis Rodriguez admitted taking money from former Republican state Sen. Frank Artiles of Miami, who has been indicted in the scheme. Before resigning in disgrace over racist comments, Artiles served as chairman of the Senate committee overseeing utilities, where he championed legislation friendly to FPL. Thanks to a diligent press in Florida, we know much of what the utility tried to hide. FPL went after government officials. FPL tracked a reporter, hoping to discredit his work. FPL used the online news site The Capitolist as a propaganda outlet. We even know about FPL's private bar in Tallahassee for friendly legislators — a secret, the way FPL likes it. The latest reporting undercuts Silagy's attempt at deniability. He and FPL's platoons of PR spinmeisters have tried to blame Matrix, its dark arts consulting firm from Alabama. But a story by the Sentinel's Annie Martin, done in conjunction with nonprofit news organization Floodlight, reveals that Silagy sent the email with instructions to make Jose Javier Rodriguez's life "a living hell." The revelation is no surprise. It's the culmination of how FPL under Silagy has made the Florida government a wholly owned subsidiary. It began in January 2010. The Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities in Florida, had reduced FPL's proposed rate increase from \$1.2 billion to \$75 million. Four months later, Silagy became vice president for regulatory and legislative affairs. FPL wanted friendlier treatment. Silagy delivered. When Silagy became president in December 2011, FPL was ready for a new rate request. This time, however, four of the five commissioners from the earlier case were gone, and the one holdover had come around. The new PSC gave the utility all it wanted. In the decade since, the commission has never ruled against FPL in any meaningful way. FPL arranged its current rate deal, which runs through 2025 and is under court challenge, to give businesses a break at the expense of homeowners. FPL now has almost 6 million Florida customers and sells more electricity than any other utility in the country. In 2021, FPL generated 86% of all profits for its parent company, Juno Beach-based NextEra Energy, according to NextEra's annual report. To keep those profits high, FPL targeted democracy. But it's time for Florida to respond. Attorney General Ashley Moody should empanel a grand jury to probe FPL's and Silagy's actions. Doing so, of course, would require that Moody look past the \$25,000 campaign contribution she got from FPL in March. Relevant committees in the Legislature should hold hearings, with Silagy the star witness. Doing so, of course, would require lawmakers to investigate real election fraud, rather than restrict voting in the name of preventing imaginary fraud. To show how cozy Tallahassee has become on utility regulation, the newest member of the Public Service Commission is Gabriella Passidomo. Her mother is incoming Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, R-Naples. On Aug. 23, the panel that screens applicants for the commission will nominate finalists for two upcoming vacancies. One is Passidomo's. The other is Gary Clark's. Passidomo and Clark want another term. Both are expected to be among the finalists. If they are, Gov. Ron DeSantis is expected to reappoint them. That system is part of the problem. Half of the nominating panel's 12 members are legislators, and that all by itself is a corrupting influence. During the last election cycle, NextEra and FPL gave \$5.4 million to candidates in Florida. Under this system, even a governor who favors stronger regulation probably could not get his or her preferred candidate. The Legislature should eliminate the nominating panel and let the governor make the choices, subject to Senate confirmation. Hold a governor responsible for anti-consumer choices. Finally, last month came a sign that even FPL had gone too far. The company had wanted to charge customers more for preparing the power grid to withstand a freeze like the one that hit Texas last year. But critics argued persuasively that FPL presented no evidence that the upgrade was necessary. The company withdrew the plan. In 2021, Silagy's compensation was \$15.1 million, a fine reward for extracting revenue from customers who would be paying less if Florida's regulated monopoly system had real regulation behind it. Last month, however, a utilities analyst downgraded NextEra Energy, in large part because of "growing media scrutiny" about FPL. That scrutiny continues with new revelations in the Miami Herald that FPL used dark money to defeat a Democrat in a 2018 Gainesville-area Senate race. In that case, FPL's operatives recruited another Democrat who had lost a Gainesville city commission race. He siphoned off enough support from the party's preferred choice that the FPL-friendly Republican won. That was a test run for the 2020 dirty tricks against Jose Javier Rodriguez. In those rare moments when the company isn't subverting democracy, FPL says it wants to be carbon emission-free by 2045. How much would that cost customers? Can FPL get there despite being one of the least efficient utilities in the country? Regulators and politicians should be asking these questions, and not stopping for drinks at FPL's secret watering hole in the shadow of

the state Capitol. Force Silagy out of the darkness and into the light.

Editor's note: This editorial has been slightly modified to more accurately reflect the actions regarding the 2020 Senate race. The Orlando Sentinel Editorial Board includes Editor-in-Chief Julie Anderson, Opinion Editor Krys Fluker, Insight Editor Jay Reddick and El Sentinel Editor Jennifer Marcial Ocasio. The Sun Sentinel Editorial Board consists of Editorial Page Editor Steve Bousquet, Deputy Editorial Page Editor Dan Sweeney, and Anderson.

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Sincerely,
Beatrice Balboa
1010 South Ocean Boulevard, Unit 1008
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USA

Some Northwest Florida customers are unhappy with FP&L's takeover of Gulf Power

WUWF | By Dave Dunwoody

Published August 15, 2022 at 8:56 PM CDT

LISTEN • 5:58



Jennie McKeon / WUWF Public Media

Okaloosa County resident, Elizabeth (last name withheld), says she watches her meter after the FPL rate increase.

Many Northwest Florida residents appear less than thrilled at some of the actions by the firm that took over Gulf Power Company almost two years ago.

NextEra Energy Inc., the parent firm of Florida Power & Light, acquired Gulf Power from the Southern Company in 2019, and officially changed its name to FP&L on January 1, 2021.

“Over time, the transactions will allow NextEra to expand its best in class value proposition of low bills, clean energy, higher reliability, and outstanding customer service to the customers of Gulf Power,” said then-President and CEO Jim Robo in 2018. He stepped down last March and was succeeded by Eric Silagy.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, who is running for reelection and appears to be gearing up for a presidential bid in 2024, vetoed one of the utility's biggest statehouse priorities, that would have curbed the development of a residential rooftop solar industry in Florida.

“Obviously, when you have the prices rising through everything it's a huge burden on people to be able to see gas bills, energy bills, all this stuff go,” said the governor. “My view is, we want to have affordable energy in the state of Florida. And we're committed to doing that.”

“I wasn't even thrilled about that legislation, but it's OK. It was a start,” said FP&L's Eric Silagy, appearing at a climate conference in Miami Beach this past May.

“Rooftop solar is something that I personally and the company have supported from the very beginning,” he said. “And I have no problem with anybody who wants to put solar on the roof. In fact, I think people should have the absolute right to put [panels] on their roof — as long as they do it safely and then meet electrical codes.”

One sticking point, Silagy says, is the requirement for electric utilities to purchase excess power from rooftop solar at the full retail rate, in effect, paying more for a wholesale product. That's about four times wholesale, and the customers end up footing the bill.

“This is not about electric utilities not having to pay something,” Silagy said. “I think what people need to appreciate is the fact that the cost of power is a cost of the Public Service Commission's, our regulators,

must actually allow us to recover by law. Because this is a state-mandated requirement.”

Officials at FP&L did not return calls seeking an interview for this story.

Elizabeth — who asked that her last name and city be withheld — said she never had any problems with Gulf Power. But after FP&L took over, her bill went up drastically including a 46-kilowatt jump, literally overnight, last winter.

“My bill was about \$70 to \$80 a month and it jumped up to \$252, and that was just barely using the heat at all,” she said.

Elizabeth has filed a complaint with the Florida Public Service Commission, which has not responded, and contacted FP&L, with the same result. Meantime, she is trying to keep down the power bill this summer, by turning off her central A/C.

“I have just one window unit I’m using and I stay right near that,” she said. “I can’t even let my grandson come and stay with me. The lights are off, and still, for using nothing, I got my bill down to about \$108. But I’m not using anything to justify even that.”

And Elizabeth offers this advice to her fellow FP&L customers.

“Physically, watch the meter because that’s how you’re going to catch any mistakes,” she said. “I don’t want to sound conspiratorial, but it seems like since I started doing that I haven’t seen as many mistakes. I

made [FP&L] aware that I'm doing this; I just don't know what to think."

ENERGY USE COMPARISON		Change
This Month	Last Month	Last Year
Feb 10, 2022	Jan 11, 2022	Feb 10, 2021
1576	832	1000
CHANGE		
1576		

KEEP IN MIND
• The non-rate energy charge is \$0.10775 per kWh used during the billing period up to 1,000 kWh and \$0.11775 per kWh for usage above 1,000 kWh.
The fuel charge is \$0.03487 per kWh used up to 1,000 kWh and \$0.03487 per kWh for usage above 1,000 kWh.

Jennie McKeon / WUWF Public Media

Elizabeth's bill shows increase in the past year.

"There are things that FP&L has done, relative to cleaning up the overall profile of Gulf Power, that I think in the long run are going to have some advantages," said Steve Smith, CEO of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy.

Based in Knoxville, Tennessee, SACE has offices in seven states -- including Florida. Another major issue is Florida Power and Light's rate structure. Some of the utility's customers are said to be shelling out more than what they paid to Gulf Power.

"One of the areas that FP&L could be doing more, that Gulf Power was doing, is actually working with customers to lower their usage through energy efficiency," Smith said. "Which then ends up lowering their bills, or at least moderating some of the increases. They're missing an opportunity to help customers manage their bills."

As far as the future, Smith says in the near term there are some real issues coming out of Europe with the war in Ukraine, and Europe's attempt to wean itself

off Russian gas. In Florida, that takes the form of price increases through fuel charges.

“I don’t see any way around that. Florida made some very big bets — FP&L in particular — on fossil gas,” he said. “Some of those bets have been good investments up to this point; but now as gas prices start to creep their way up, that may be problematic.”

Smith is quick to add that FP&L is also breaking ground with a “Real Zero” carbon emissions aimed at completely moving away from fossil fuel sources by 2045. That features major investments in solar and storage, along with “green hydrogen” and other projects.

“We’re talking 10 to 15 years out, which we think gas prices are going to continue to be volatile,” Smith said. “So I think in the longer term, some plans on the table that are good both economically — and good for the environment. But I think in the near term, the historic commitments to fossil gas are going to see price increases.”

The bottom line for FP&L, and other utilities, is that their fortunes rise and fall with the Public Service Commission. And according to the Alliance’s Steve Smith, it’s falling short.

“You don’t pay a rate, you actually pay a bill which is rate plus consumption,” said Smith. “This is a part of the equation that we don’t see the Florida Public Service Commission, nor FP&L really leaning into and leading on. And I think that could help moderate some of the near-term gas price increases, and it

could actually help the overall system be more efficient.”

Some of the repairs to be made by Florida Power and Light are not necessarily part of the grid. The utility is also dealing with negative publicity, generated by reports of an exclusive lounge for lawmakers and lobbyists; and taking over a media outlet to produce only positive stories about the utility.

Some insurance companies dropping Florida customers if they put solar panels on their homes

Some insurance companies that covered solar panels in the past are no longer writing new policies for solar power

Author: **Jessica Clark**

Published: **6:49 PM EDT August 15, 2022**

Updated: **6:52 PM EDT August 15, 2022**



ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. — If you put solar panels on your roof, your home insurance company could drop you.

Fewer insurance companies will even cover solar panels on homes in Florida. It's happening more and more now. So what's going on?

"Something is going on, it's very strange, I can't underscore how strange it is," Heaven Campbell with Solar United Neighbors said.

Lately, when Floridians want to put solar panels on their home, some home insurance companies are saying goodbye and canceling the policies.

"Sometimes the homeowners only have 30 days to find replacements," Rebecca Houpe of Ancient City Insurance said.

She's seeing this over and over again in the last year or so.

In addition, some insurance companies that have covered solar panels in the past, are no longer writing new policies.

St. Augustine Insurance agent Doug Wiles is President of Herbie Wiles *Insurance*. He told *First Coast News* that insurance companies may be shying away from solar panels because of a clause in some Florida Power and Light contracts that says any damage caused by the panels, "you as a homeowner are responsible to pay for all of that damage."

Often insurance companies will give an example such as a surge running through your panels that causes damage to the grid or other homes.

RELATED: FPL unveils world's largest solar-powered battery in Manatee County

However, the theory that solar panels can cause damage like that is bogus according to state authorities, Campbell said.

"There are no cases of solar being a threat to the utility grid," Campbell said.

In 2020, she says the "Public Service Commission told utilities to stop putting up insurance barriers specifically requiring high liability insurance."

However, that liability is still being given as a reason for insurance companies not discontinue or not create home insurance policies if there are solar panels.

Home insurance companies are also denying coverage if the homeowner chooses to sell the extra power their panels make back to the electric company. The system is called net metering, and it's a common practice for a homeowner with solar panels.

Campbell said the fact that insurance companies are denying coverage because of net-metering "which is a billing methodology" is odd.

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She said this issue is happening in all over Florida, but not in the rest of the country.

So what's keeping some insurance companies from covering solar panels? Is it political? Does it have something to do with the sway of electric companies?

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"So far we don't know where it's coming from. I think it smells fishing," Campbell said. "That's something we are 100 percent investigating."

For now, it means people who are interested in cleaner energy production are shying away from solar out of fear of losing their home insurance.

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