

**BEFORE THE FLORIDA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

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In re: Petition for Rate Increase by  
Duke Energy Florida, LLC

Docket No. 20240025-EI

Filed: April 22, 2024

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**DUKE ENERGY FLORIDA’S RESPONSE IN OPPOSITION TO OFFICE OF PUBLIC  
COUNSEL’S MOTION FOR ADDITIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE HEARINGS**

Pursuant to Rule 28-106.204(1), F.A.C., Duke Energy Florida, LLC (“DEF” or the “Company”) hereby files this Response in Opposition to the Office of Public Counsel’s (“OPC”) Motion for Additional Customer Service Hearings (“Motion”). The setting of customer service hearings is within the purview of the Commission, and it has set an appropriate number of them for this proceeding. Accordingly, OPC’s Motion should be denied. In further support, DEF states:

1. The Commission has set four customer service hearings for DEF’s rate case. They are spread over time and locations and include opportunities for virtual participation. Specifically, there are four in-person locations (two in Tallahassee, one in Inverness and one in Largo). The two Tallahassee hearings also offer virtual participation. Two of these hearings (Tallahassee and Largo) start at 6 pm. Commission Staff approved the customer notice for these hearings, which DEF will provide with May bills, consistent with Rule 25-22.0406, F.A.C.
2. The Commission has discretion when setting customer service hearings in a rate proceeding. “In deciding how best to hear from customers, it is both prudent and within the Commission's discretion to weigh a myriad of factors in each rate case that include

but are not limited to the financial costs borne by utility customers, the Commission, and parties in conducting service hearings in-person or by virtual means... It is the Commission's responsibility to determine the appropriate medium in which customers service hearings are held, as a result of the totality of the circumstances in each rate case.” *In Re: Petition for Rate Increase by Florida City Gas*, Docket No. 20220069, Order No. PSC-2022-0276-PCO-GU (July 15, 2022) at pp. 2 and 3.

3. OPC refers to DEF’s last fully litigated rate case in 2009, and the number of service hearings set in that case, to argue that the hearings in the current case should be increased. However, the 2009 case is not a relevant comparison, because virtual attendance was not an option for that proceeding. Virtual hearings allow all customers, irrespective of their location in DEF’s service territory, to participate. “Unlike in-person service hearings, where the location and time of a service hearing dictates customer participation, virtual hearings empower customers to choose which time of day is most convenient for them - morning, afternoon, or evening. This enhanced customer choice comes without the expense or inconvenience of travel or lost work hours.” *Florida City Gas* at p. 3.
4. Simply put, there is no set formula for the location or number of service hearings. In this instance, the Commission has properly exercised its discretion and balanced all the factors to set four customer service hearings (two of which are virtual) for DEF’s customers to provide input on DEF’s rate case. In addition to these four service hearings, customers have the ability to submit feedback to the Commission in other ways (for example, sending written comments via U.S. mail or email which are placed

in the docket and reviewed by the Commission). There is no justification to add six additional service hearings, as suggested by OPC in its Motion.

WHEREFORE, DEF respectfully requests that the Commission deny OPC's Motion.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Dianne M. Triplett* \_\_\_\_\_

**DIANNE M. TRIPLETT**

Deputy General Counsel  
299 First Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
T: 727. 820.4692  
E: [Dianne.Triplett@Duke-Energy.com](mailto:Dianne.Triplett@Duke-Energy.com)

**MATTHEW R. BERNIER**

Associate General Counsel  
106 E. College Avenue, Suite 800  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
T: 850.521.1428  
E: [Matt.Bernier@Duke-Energy.com](mailto:Matt.Bernier@Duke-Energy.com)

**STEPHANIE A. CUELLO**

Senior Counsel  
106 East College Avenue  
Suite 800  
Tallahassee, Florida 32301  
T: (850) 521-1425  
E: [Stephanie.Cuello@duke-energy.com](mailto:Stephanie.Cuello@duke-energy.com)  
[FLRegulatoryLegal@duke-energy.com](mailto:FLRegulatoryLegal@duke-energy.com)

**MOLLY JAGANNATHAN**

[molly.jagannathan@troutman.com](mailto:molly.jagannathan@troutman.com)

**MELISSA O. NEW**

[melissa.butler@troutman.com](mailto:melissa.butler@troutman.com)

Troutman Pepper, LLC  
600 Peachtree Street NE, Ste. 3000  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
T: (404) 885-3939

Attorneys for Duke Energy Florida, LLC

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been furnished via electronic mail to the following this 22nd day of April, 2024

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/s/ Dianne M. Triplett  
Attorney

<p>Jennifer Crawford / Major Thompson / Shaw Stiller Office of General Counsel Florida Public Service Commission 2540 Shumard Oak Blvd. Tallahassee, FL 32399-0850 <a href="mailto:JCrawfor@psc.state.fl.us">JCrawfor@psc.state.fl.us</a> <a href="mailto:MThompso@psc.state.fl.us">MThompso@psc.state.fl.us</a> <a href="mailto:SStiller@psc.state.fl.us">SStiller@psc.state.fl.us</a></p>	<p>Walt Trierweiler / Charles J. Rehwinkel / Mary Wessling / Austin Watrous Office of Public Counsel 111 W. Madison St., Rm 812 Tallahassee, FL 32399 <a href="mailto:rehwinkel.charles@leg.state.fl.us">rehwinkel.charles@leg.state.fl.us</a> <a href="mailto:trierweiler.walt@leg.state.fl.us">trierweiler.walt@leg.state.fl.us</a> <a href="mailto:watrous.austin@leg.state.fl.us">watrous.austin@leg.state.fl.us</a> <a href="mailto:wessling.mary@leg.state.fl.us">wessling.mary@leg.state.fl.us</a></p>
<p>Jon C. Moyle, Jr. / Karen A. Putnal Moyle Law Firm, P.A. FIPUG 118 North Gadsden Street Tallahassee, Florida 32301 <a href="mailto:jmoyle@moylelaw.com">jmoyle@moylelaw.com</a> <a href="mailto:kputnal@moylelaw.com">kputnal@moylelaw.com</a></p>	<p>Bradley Marshall / Jordan Luebke Earthjustice LULAC &amp; FL Rising 111 S. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Tallahassee, Florida 32301 <a href="mailto:bmarshall@earthjustice.org">bmarshall@earthjustice.org</a> <a href="mailto:jluebke@earthjustice.org">jluebke@earthjustice.org</a></p>
<p>Tony Mendoza / Patrick Woolsey Sierra Club 2101 Webster Street Suite 1300 Oakland, CA 94612 <a href="mailto:tony.mendoza@sierraclub.org">tony.mendoza@sierraclub.org</a> <a href="mailto:patrick.woolsey@sierraclub.org">patrick.woolsey@sierraclub.org</a></p>	<p>Robert Scheffel Wright / John T. LaVia, III Gardner, Bist, Bowden, Dee, LaVia, Wright, Perry &amp; Harper, P.A. Florida Retail Federation 1300 Thomaswood Drive Tallahassee, Florida 32308 <a href="mailto:schef@gbwlegal.com">schef@gbwlegal.com</a> <a href="mailto:jlavia@gbwlegal.com">jlavia@gbwlegal.com</a></p>
<p>Sari Amiel Sierra Club 50 F St. NW, Eighth Floor Washington, DC 20001 <a href="mailto:sari.amiel@sierraclub.org">sari.amiel@sierraclub.org</a></p> <p>James W. Brew / Laura Wynn Baker / Sarah B. Newman Stone Mattheis Xenopoulos &amp; Brew, PC PCS Phosphate-White Springs 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW Suite 800 West Washington, DC 20007-5201 <a href="mailto:jbrew@smxblaw.com">jbrew@smxblaw.com</a> <a href="mailto:lwb@smxblaw.com">lwb@smxblaw.com</a> <a href="mailto:sbn@smxblaw.com">sbn@smxblaw.com</a></p>	<p>Peter J. Mattheis / Michael K. Lavanga / Joseph R. Briscar Stone Mattheis Xenopoulos &amp; Brew, PC NUCOR 1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW Suite 800 West Washington, DC 20007-5201 <a href="mailto:pjm@smxblaw.com">pjm@smxblaw.com</a> <a href="mailto:mkl@smxblaw.com">mkl@smxblaw.com</a> <a href="mailto:jrb@smxblaw.com">jrb@smxblaw.com</a></p>