

JAMES R. DEAN (JIM)
3097 5th Street
Marianna, FL 32446
850-718-3483

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Subject: Florida Public Utilities

COMMISSION
CLERK

2025 JAN 16 PM 1:57

Docket No. 20240099-EI

Petition for Rate Increase by Florida Public Utilities Co. (FPU)

OPPOSE INCREASE

FPU is requesting a rate increase. Based on FPU's correspondence to the public this is necessitated by stating their last increase was 2014 and since that time FPU has made significant capital expenditures, particularly associated with "reliability improvements", and has faced increased operating and maintenance costs associated, to a significant degree, with customer service improvements, system improvements to enhance reliability. "The Company has over the same period, faced increased operating and maintenance costs associated, to a significant degree, with customer service improvements, increased regulatory requirements, and system improvements to enhance reliability."

FPU is misleading the public with these statements based on my opinion for the following reasons:

1. Improve customer service has not been done, it has been degraded. FPU made a poor management decision to close its office in Marianna eliminating the public's primary access to the electric utility. The service territory for FPU is 100% rural with very low density, the largest city served only has a population of 6,300, it was a terrible decision to degrade customer service by moving it to another state.
2. FPU made a poor management decision to move billing and customer service to another state, and eliminate jobs within its own territory and spend funds outside of its territory on billing systems and staff. Why should rate payers pay/fund jobs and equipment that is not located within FPU territory by funding infrastructure within another state?
3. For 5 years or more customers have been repaying FPU for the cost associated with Hurricane Michael's destruction, a significant portion of FPU's distribution system was destroyed and has been completely replaced with a new distribution system. How can maintenance cost go up when you have a new distribution system.
4. There are numerous street lights that don't work and there is no plan or process with FPU that addresses this issue. It is unknown how many street lights cities are paying for on a monthly basis that don't even work. Also, there are street lights that seem to be timed to where they stay on for a limited amount of time and shut off, then come back on. Cities are paying monthly rates on lighting that should be on continuously but is not. There is no plan nor has there been an effort to develop a plan to replace lights that don't work and that are inefficient. This should be considered poor management.

5. FPU uses old inefficient street lighting that does not reduce consumption. Most communities have gone to LED lighting that reduces total energy consumption, which intern reduces the amount of power FPU has to purchase. FPU has made no effort to convert lights to more energy efficient lighting, which is a reflection on the business they conduct and a poor business model.
6. Homeowners and cities have gone to solar energy to try and offset high energy bills. The City of Marianna has converted its wastewater operations to run on solar. It is a concern this rate case is just an attempt to modify the net metering tariff to discourage and penalize customers that take advantage of solar energy. FPU is retaliating against these customers.
7. FPU's poor management has squandered the cost recovery charge it has collected over the past 5 years. There recovery process has completely ignored what happened as a result of Hurricane Michael. There has been no collaboration with emergency services to try and build back better. Cities have approached FPU about undergrounding main highways and critical services but FPU does not respond nor do they attempt to address this issue. This is completely inconsistent with what the State of Florida has done as a result disasters to encourage the hardening of facilities and assisting with funding for these efforts.

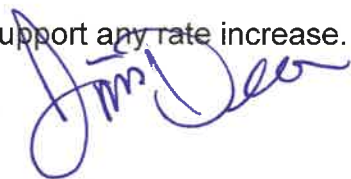
Based on Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) website, FPU has the highest electric rates in the State of Florida, of investor owned electric utilities. The proposed rate increase ensures an 11.3% rate of return for FPU, which is allowed because rate payers in their territory have no other options to receive service from another provider.

For the highest rates, customers get the worst service, and as a bonus rate payers will be rewarding poor service and poor management with a guaranteed 11.3% rate of return.

The Florida Public Service Commission should deny the rate increase and require a reduction in rates due to poor service and poor management decisions.

I do not support any rate increase.

Jim Dean



CC: Governor DeSantis
State Senator Jay Trumbull
State Representative Shane Abbott
Commissioners of FPSC